The Great Controversy

Study Guide

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Introduction

The Great Controversy did not begin in Genesis 3. It began in heaven when Lucifer, the guardian cherub – the beautiful angel who stood in the presence of God (Ez. 28:13-17) – decided that he wanted what God had.

- ***Isaiah 14:12-14 –*** *How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."*

After being expelled from heaven, this once glorious being, became the great dragon *"that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan."* (Rev. 12:9) His plan? Destroy God, if he can. His back-up plan? Destroy all that God loves.

In Genesis 3, Satan brought the war to earth. He was successful – he got humans to distrust God. In that moment, planet earth became the battle ground in the war between good and evil – between God and Satan.

Praise God that is not the end of the story. The Bible tells us of God's rescue plan. The plan that would wound the heel of the Rescuer and crush the head of the snake.

The instigator of the war has an expiration date – there will be an end to the *"Great Controversy."*

In this study, we are going to trace the history of the Great Controversy on earth, from before creation, through 1000s of years of conflict, to the 2nd Coming of Jesus and beyond as written by Ellen G. White.

Why spend time on *"The Great Controversy"* as seen through the lens of history?

- ***Ellen White:*** *In these records we may see a foreshadowing of the conflict before us. Regarding them in the light of God's word, and by the illumination of His Spirit, we may see unveiled the devices of the wicked one, and the dangers which they must shun who would be found "without fault" before the Lord at His coming.* {GC xi.3}

  It is not so much the object of this book to present new truths concerning the struggles of former times, as to bring out facts and principles which have a bearing on coming events. Yet viewed as a part of the controversy between the forces of light and darkness, all these records of the past are seen to have a new significance; and through them a light is cast upon the future, illumining the pathway of those who, like the reformers of past ages, will be called, even at the peril of all earthly good, to witness "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." {GC xii.1}

  "The work of God in the earth presents, from age to age, a striking similarity in every great reformation or religious movement. The principles of God's dealing with men are ever the same. The important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past, and the experience of the church in former ages has lessons of great value for our own time." – 343.1

For study purposes, we will use the 1911 version of The Great Controversy. I have intentionally modified or eliminated paragraphs for ease of use and time considerations. I encourage you to read The Great Controversy in its entirety.

Let's get started.

Time-line

70 AD – Destruction of Jerusalem

54-313 AD – Persecution of Christians (Nero (54-68 AD) thru Constantine the Great (306-337 AD)). In **313 AD** Christianity was give legal recognition by Constantine the Great who was the 1st Emperor to convert to Christianity.

380 AD – Christianity adopted as the official state religion of the Roman Empire by Emperor Theodosius I.

382 AD – St. Jerome begins work on a Latin Translation of the Bible (The Vulgate). His work would be adopted by the Western Church and would be affirmed as the official Bible of the Catholic Church at the Council of Trent (1545-1563).

496 AD – Clovis, king of the Franks, becomes the 1st pagan king to adopt Catholocism and quickly combined his own interests with those of the church. He viewed the conflict with the Visigoths (Arian Christians) as a religious war.

508 AD – Clovis defeats the Visigoths. Catholic Power Acknowledged in the West.

538 AD – Pope Vigilius is elected pope and is considered the 1st pope of the Byzantine papacy. The 1260 day/year prophecy of Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:3; 12:6, 14; 13:5 begins.

1140 – Cathars are the 1st organized body to pose a serious threat to the authority of the Institutional Church.

1173 – **The Waldensian movement** is founded by Peter Waldo and quickly come into conflict with the Catholic Church because they did not recognize a special class of preisthood, objected to the veneration of saints and rejected the sacramental authority of the Institutional church.

1184-1230's – Medieval Inquisition (included the Epicaopal Inquisition and the Papal inquisition) was established in response to movements that were considered apostate or heretical – including the Cathars and the Waldensians.

1215 – Waldensians declared heretical and were subjected to discrimination and intense persecution. In the 1500's they were absorbed into the Protestant movement.

1328-1384 – **John Wycliffe** - the "morning star" of the English Reformation was born at Yorkshire, England.

- **1378** – Begins a systematic attack on the beliefs and practicies of the institutional church.
- **1380** – Prepares to Translate the Bible into Middle English.
- **1384** – Dies of a stroke. Later his bones were burned and scattered.

1370-1415 – **John Huss** (Jan Hus) born at Husinec, Bohemia (modern Czech Repulic).

- **1412 –** Excommunicated
- **1415** (July 6) – Burned at the stake. He died singing.

1378 – Election of 2 rival Popes: Urban VI in Rome and Clement VII in Avignon

1379-1416 – **Jerome** born at Prague, Bohemia. He was a student at Charles University in Prague where he came under the influence of John Huss. After studying in England he returned to Prague and began spreading the teachings of John Wycliffe.

- **1415** – Arrested and imprisoned for more than a year. He disavows the teachings of Wycliffe and Huss.
- **1416** (May 26 & 30) – Withdraws his ealier declaration. Is judged to be a relapsed heretic and is burned at the stake.

1409 – Election of 3 rival Popes: the Pope of Rome, the Pope of Avignon and the Pope of Pisa

1440 – Johannes Gutenberg invents the Printing Press (Europe). 1450 begins commercial use.

1455-1536 – **Jacques Lefevre** born at Etaples, Picardy, France. Lefevre was a French humanist, theologian and translated the entire Latin Vulgate into French. Leader in the early Protestant Reformation.

1473-1481 – Construction of the Sistine Chapel for Pope Sixtus IV

1478 – *"The Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition"* established in Spain by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to consolidate power and combat heresy and perceived threats to religious orthodoxy – brutal methods were employed. The Jewish population in Spain, amongst the largest in Europe, became a target (as did the Muslim population). In **1492** the Spanish Jews were given the choice of exile or baptism – to resist meant all forms of persecution. The Spanish Inquisition did not come to a formal end until **1834.**

1483-1546 – **Martin Luther** born at Eisleben, Saxony (Germany)

- **1505** – Enters the priesthood.
- **1510** – Goes to Rome.
- **1517** (Oct 31) – Posts 95 Theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg.
- **1518** – Trial at Augsburg
- **1521** (Jan 03) – Formally Excommunicated and declared a heretic.
- **1521** (April 17) – Diet of Worms – Edict declaring Luther and his followers to be outlaws and ordering all writings to be burned. Luther goes into hiding after being "kidnapped" and taken secretly to Wartburg Castle.
- **1525** – Marries Katherine of Bora – a former nun. By all accounts theirs was a happy marriage and family life.
- **1546** (Feb 18) – Dies- buried at the Castle Church in Wittenberg.

1484-1531 – Huldrych (Ulrich) Zwingly born at Toggenburg, Switzerland.

- **1506** – Ordained to the preisthood.
- **1519** – Nearly dies of Plague.
- **1520-1529** – Active in the formation of the Swiss Reformation.
- **1531** – 2nd War of Kappel – Zwingly joins as a chaplain.
- **1531** (Oct 11) – killed in Battle near Kappel.

1487-1555 – Hugh Latimer born at Leicestershire, England. He was, in his words, and obstinate Papist. After an encounter with Thomas Bilney, Latimer bacame a champion of the Reformation. According to J.C. Ryle, "No one of the Reformers probably sowed the seeds of Protestant doctrine so widely and effectually among the middle and lower classes as Latimer." In **1553**, after "Bloody Mary" came to the throne, he was sent to the tower of London and burned at the stake **Oct. 16, 1555**

1489-1565 – **Guillaume (Willliam) Farel** born at Dauphine, France. Was a student of Jacques Lefevre.. Was responsible for introducing the Reformation to French speaking Switzerland.

1492 – Christopher Columbus' 1st of 4 transatlantic voyages under the sponsorship of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Opens the way for European exploration, colonization and exploitation of the Americas.

1492-1536 – **William Tyndale** was born at Gloucestershire, England. He translated the New Testament **1525**. Began work of the Old Testament (completing the 1st 5 books) but was captured in Antwerp and condemned for heresy. He strangled and then burned at the stake on **Oct. 6, 1536**.

1493-1552 – **Olaf Petri** born at Orebro, Sweden. Was a clergyman, writer, judge and a major contributor to the Protestant Reformation on Sweden along with his brother, Laurentius.

1491-1547 – Henry 8th born at Greenwich, England. Reigned from **1509-1547**. Established the Church of England – cutting ties with Rome. He did this inorder to divorce his 1st wife, Catherine of Aragon, and marry Anne Bolyne.

1494-1547 – Francis I of France born at the Chateau de Cognac.

1494-1561 – **Hans Tausen** born at Birkende, Denmark. Was a leading Lutheran theologian of the Danish Reformation.

1496-1561 – **Menno Simons** born at Friesland Holland. Was a Dutch priest who was excommunicated and became an influential Dutch Anabaptist leader (Mennonites).

1499-1573 – **Laurentius Petri** born at Orebro, Sweden. Was a Swedish clergyman and the 1st Evangelical Lutheran Archbishop of Sweden.

1506-1615 – Construction of St. Peter's Basilica (church). Begun by Pope Julius II and completed under Pope Paul V.

1508-1512 – Pope Julius II comissions Michelangelo to paint the ceiling frescoes for the Sistine Chapel.

1509-1564 – John Calvin born at Noyon, Picardy, France. Established the Reformed Church in Geneva.

1514-1572 – **John Knox** was born at East Lothian, Scotland. He was the foremost leader of the Scottish Reformation. He was influenced by George Wishart, who was burned at the stake in **1546**. He was one of the last Protestants leaders to flee England when Mary Tudor "Bloody Mary" became queen in **1553**. He died at St. Andrews in **1572**.

1516-1558 – Mary Tudor (Bloody Mary) – 1st child of Henry 8th born at Greenwich, England. Became queen in **1553** after the death of her younger brother, Edward. She made it her mission to restore England to a Catholic nation.

1529 – The Diet of Spires and the German Princes

1529 (April 17) – **Louis de Berquin** declared a heretic – he was strangled and his body burned.

1530ish-1774 – **French Huguenots** were Protestants who followed the teachings of John Calvin. Persecuted to near extinction by the French Catholic Governement in France.

1533-1603 – Elizabeth 1st born at Greenwich, England. She was the daughter of Henry 8th and Anne Bolyne. She became queen in **1558** after the death of her ½ sister, Mary. Elizabeth died **Mar. 24, 1603**. The end of the Tudor Dynasty.

1534-1541 – Michelangelo paints the "Last Judgment" Fresco in the Sistine Chapel for Pope Paul III.

1534 – Jesuits founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola.

1534 – The Act of Supremacy passed by Parliament in England, declaring Henry 8th and his successors as the Supreme Head of the Church of England (Anglican).

1535 (January 21) – French Protestants burned at the stake in front of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris.

1542 – The Roman Inquisition established to combat Protestantism.

1542-1587 – Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots born at Linlithgow Palace, Scotland. At a week old she bacame Queen of Scotland after her father, James V died. She reigned until **1567** when she was forced to abdicate – she was the last Catholic ruler in Scotland. She was beheaded on **Feb. 8, 1587** by order of her cousin, Elizabeth 1st, Queen of England.

1545 – The Council of Trent

1555 (Oct 25) – Holy Roman Emperor Charles V Abdicates

1566-1625 – James 6th of Scotland (1st of England) born at Edinburgh Castle, Scotland. Became king of England in **1603**.

1572 (August 23-24) **– St. Bartholomew Massacre –** was a wave of Catholic mob violence directed against the Huguenots. It is estimated that 70,000 French Protestants were killed.

1603-1683 – Roger Williams born at London, England. He came to North America in 1631. He was a firm believer in Religious Liberty and the Separation of Church and State. He founded the the state of Rhode Island after being banished from the Colonies for his views - it was the 1st place in modern history where citizenship and religion were separate.

1607 (May 14) – **Jamestown** – 1st permanent English settlement in North America – present-day Williamsburg, Virginia.

1611 – *"King James"* version of the Bible published in England.

1618-1648 – **30 years war**. A continuation of the religious conflict between the Reformation and the Holy Roman Empire as well as a desire for dominance in Europe between the Hapsburg (Spain and Austria) and the House of Borbon in France. It is estimated that between 4.5-8 million people (military and civilian) died.

1620 (November) – **The Mayflower** arrives in the New World. Of the 102 passangers, only 40 were Protestant Separatists – who hoped to establish a new church in the *"New World"* after experiening persecution in England.

1703-1791 – **John Wesley** born at Epworth, England. In **1728**, John was ordained as a priest of the church of England. Mission work began in America in **1735.** Is considered the father of the Methodist church. Was an outspoken Abolisionist.

1707-1788 – **Charles Wesley** born at Epworth, England. In **1728**, Charles was ordained as a priest in the Church of England. Mission work began in America in **1735**. He wrote more than 6,500 hymns, many we still sing today.

1755 (November 1) – Lisbon Earthquake

1765-1783- The American Revolution

- 1765 (Mar 22) – English Parliament passes the Stamp Act
- 1770 (Mar 05) – Boston Massacre
- 1773 (May 10) – English Parliament passes the Tea Act
- 1773 (Dec 16) – Boston Tea Party
- 1774 (Sept 05) – 1st Continental Congress
- 1775 (Mar 23) – Patrick Henry's *"Give me liberty of give me death"* becomes the rallying cry for Revolution.
- 1775 (May 10) – 2nd Continental Congress
- 1776 (July 04) – Declaration of Independence
- 1778 (Feb 06) – France supports the Colonists (will contibute to the French Revolution)
- 1783 (Sept 03) – Treaty of Paris ends the war and estblishes the sovereignty of the United States of America.

1780 (May 19) – Sun and Moon Darkened

1782-1849 – William Miller born at Pittsfield, Massachusettes. He will become the the leader of the Millerite Movement, teaching the literal and soon return of Jesus.

1789 – French Revolution begins with the storming of the Bastille

1793 (January 21) – Louis 16th executed (guillotined) in Paris. Abolition of the French Monarchy and establishment of the French Republic.

1793 – The Jacobins seize control of the National Convention in France and institute measures that included the eradication of Christianity in France.

1795-1840 (approximate) – The 2nd Great Awakening – A Protestant Religious Revival that arose in the USA in response to increasing secularlism and decreasing religious principles. Contributed to the rise of social reform movements such as Abolition, Prohibition, Civil Rights and Womens Suffrage.

1798 (Feb) – Pope Pius VI captured by general Bertier – inflicting the *"deadly wound"* of Revelation 13:3, 12 – ending the 1260 years of papal supremacy.

1799 (Nov 9) – Napolean Bonaparte stages a coup d'état and declares himself *"first consul"* of France.

1818 – William Miller is convinced that Jesus would return in 25 years.

1831 – William Miller begins to preach that the present world would end *"sometime between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844."*

1833 (Nov 13) – Great Meteor Shower off the eastern seaboard of the United States.

1844 – March 21 – The 1st Disappointment – Jesus' 2nd Coming does not occur.

- After careful research, is was determined that Jesus would return in the fall of 1844.

1844 – October 22 – The Great Disappointment – Jesus' 2nd Coming does not occur.

1863 – The Seventh-day Adventist Church is officially established. Its roots can be traced back to the Millerite movement of the 1830s to the 1840s. As of 2025, the church has over 23,000,000 baptized members worldwide.

2nd Coming of Jesus ——— DATE UNKNOWN

Prologue

The Origin of Evil

(see Chapter 29)

To many minds the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. They see the work of evil, with its terrible results of woe and desolation, and they question how all this can exist under the sovereignty of One who is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. Here is a mystery of which they find no explanation. In their uncertainty and doubt they are blinded to truths plainly revealed in God's word and essential to salvation..... Others ... fail (to understand) the great problem of evil, because tradition and misinterpretation have obscured the teaching of the Bible concerning the character of God, the nature of His government, and the principles of His dealing with sin.

It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence.... there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition in the Bible is, *"It is the transgression of the law;"* it is the action of a principle at war with the great law of love - the foundation of the divine government.

Before the entrance of evil there was peace and joy throughout the universe. All was in perfect harmony with the Creator's will. Love for God was supreme, love for one another impartial. Christ the Word, the Only Begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father – one in nature, in character, and in purpose – the only being in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. By Christ, the Father was active in the creation of all heavenly beings... and to Christ, equally with the Father, all heaven gave allegiance.

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect agreement with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love – He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will.

Sin originated with him who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God and who stood highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven. Before his fall, Lucifer was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled.

Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge a desire for self-exaltation.... Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of His creatures, he endeavored to win their service and homage to himself. And coveting the honor which the infinite Father had bestowed upon His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power which it was the prerogative of Christ alone to wield.... The heavenly councils pleaded with Lucifer. The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. God Himself had established the order of heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker, and bring ruin upon himself. But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed jealousy of Christ to prevail, and he became the more determined.

Pride in his own glory nourished the desire for supremacy.... He gloried in his brightness and exaltation, and aspired to be equal with God. He was beloved and reverenced by the heavenly host. Angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was the acknowledged Sovereign of heaven, one in power and authority with the Father. In all the councils of God, Christ was a participant, while Lucifer was not permitted to enter into the divine purposes. *"Why,"* questioned this mighty angel, *"should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He thus honored above Lucifer?"*

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of God, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, he endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint.... He sought to create sympathy for himself by representing that God had dealt unjustly with him in bestowing supreme honor upon Christ. He claimed that in aspiring to greater power and honor he was not aiming at self-exaltation, but was seeking to secure liberty for all the inhabitants of heaven, that by this means they might attain to a higher state of existence.

God in His great mercy bore long with Lucifer.... Again and again he was offered pardon on condition of repentance and submission. Such efforts as only infinite love and wisdom could devise were made to convince him of his error.

The spirit of discontent had never before been known in heaven. Lucifer himself did not at first see where he was drifting; he did not understand the real nature of his feelings. But as his dissatisfaction was proved to be without cause, Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong, that the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office. But pride forbade him to submit. He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and fully committed himself, in the great controversy, against his Maker.

All the powers of his master mind were now bent to the work of deception, to secure the sympathy of the angels that had been under his command.... From misrepresentation of the words of Christ he passed to doubt and direct falsehood, accusing the Son of God of a design to humiliate him before the inhabitants of heaven.... All whom he could not subvert and bring fully to his side he accused of indifference to the interests of heavenly beings. The very work which he himself was doing he charged upon those who remained true to God. And to sustain his charge of God's injustice toward him, he resorted to misrepresentation of the words and acts of the Creator. It was his policy to perplex the angels with subtle arguments concerning the purposes of God.... His high position, in such close connection with the divine administration, gave greater force to his representations, and many were induced to unite with him in rebellion against Heaven's authority.

God in His wisdom permitted Satan to carry forward his work, until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all. Lucifer, as the anointed cherub, had been highly exalted; he was greatly loved by the heavenly beings, and his influence over them was strong. God's government included not only the inhabitants of heaven, but of all the worlds that He had created; and Satan thought that if he could carry the angels of heaven with him in rebellion, he could carry also the other worlds. He had artfully presented his side of the question, employing trickery and fraud to secure his objects. His power to deceive was very great, and by disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood he had gained an advantage. Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character or see to what his work was leading.

Satan had been so highly honored, and all his acts were so clothed with mystery, that it was difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his work. Until fully developed, sin would not appear the evil thing it was. Heretofore it had had no place in the universe of God, and holy beings had no conception of its nature and malignity. They could not discern the terrible consequences that would result from setting aside the divine law. .... While instilling discontent into the minds of the angels under him, he had artfully made it appear that he was seeking to remove dissatisfaction. When he urged that changes be made in the order and laws of God's government, it was under the pretense that these were necessary in order to preserve harmony in heaven.

In His dealing with sin, God could employ only righteousness and truth. Satan could use what God could not-flattery and deceit…. Therefore, it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of heaven, as well as of all the worlds, that God's government was just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper, and his real object, must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works…. Therefore it was necessary that he should demonstrate the nature of his claims, and show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked.

Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted from existence, they would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might forever be placed beyond all question.

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages, a perpetual testimony to the nature and terrible results of sin. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government and His law is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy intelligences, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin and suffering its punishments.

… When it was announced that with all his sympathizers he must be expelled from the abodes of bliss, then the rebel leader boldly avowed his contempt for the Creator's law….He denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law; that, freed from this restraint, the hosts of heaven might enter upon a more exalted, more glorious state of existence… With one accord, Satan and his host threw the blame of their rebellion wholly upon Christ, declaring that if they had not been reproved, they would never have rebelled. Thus stubborn and defiant in their disloyalty, seeking vainly to overthrow the government of God, yet blasphemously claiming to be themselves the innocent victims of oppressive power, the archrebel and all his sympathizers were at last banished from heaven.

In the banishment of Satan, God declared His justice and maintained the honor of His throne. But when man sinned, God gave evidence of His love by yielding up His Son to die for the fallen race. In the atonement the character of God is revealed. The mighty argument of the cross demonstrates to the whole universe that the course of sin which Lucifer had chosen was in no wise chargeable upon the government of God.

In the final execution of the judgment it will be seen that no cause for sin exists….. The whole universe will have witnessed the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest…. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom.

Lesson 1

Enmity Between Man and Satan

(see Chapter 30)

1. Read Genesis 3:15; 1 Peter 5:8 and the following GC paragraphs:

505.1-2 – … The divine sentence pronounced against Satan after the fall of man was also a prophecy, embracing all the ages to the close of time and foreshadowing the great conflict to engage all the races of men who should live upon the earth…. This enmity is not naturally entertained. When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil, and he was in harmony, and not at variance, with Satan. There exists naturally no enmity between sinful man and the originator of sin…. For this reason fallen angels and wicked men unite in desperate companionship. Had not God specially interposed, Satan and man would have entered into an alliance against Heaven; and instead of cherishing enmity against Satan, the whole human family would have been united in opposition to God.

505.3 – Satan tempted man to sin, as he had caused angels to rebel, that he might thus secure co-operation in his warfare against Heaven…. But when Satan heard the declaration that enmity should exist between himself and the woman, and between his seed and her seed, he knew that his efforts to deprave human nature would be interrupted; that by some means man was to be enabled to resist his power.

506.1 – Satan's enmity against the human race is kindled because, through Christ, they are the objects of God's love and mercy. He desires to thwart the divine plan for man's redemption, to cast dishonor upon God, by defacing and defiling His handiwork; he would cause grief in heaven and fill the earth with woe and desolation….

506.2 – It is the grace that Christ implants in the soul which creates in man enmity against Satan. Without this converting grace and renewing power, man would continue the captive of Satan, a servant ever ready to do his bidding…. The power which Christ imparts enables man to resist the tyrant and usurper. Whoever is seen to abhor sin instead of loving it, whoever resists and conquers those passions that have held sway within, displays the operation of a principle wholly from above.

Left to ourselves whose government would we choose?

Why does Satan hate the human race and how is that hatred manifested?

What alone is responsible for the enmity created in man against Satan?

2. Read John 15:18-19; 2 Timothy 3:12 and the following GC paragraphs:

506.3 – The antagonism that exists between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of Satan was most strikingly displayed in the world's reception of Jesus. It was not so much because He appeared without worldly wealth, pomp, or grandeur that the Jews were led to reject Him. They saw that He possessed power which would more than compensate for the lack of these outward advantages. But the purity and holiness of Christ called forth against Him the hatred of the ungodly. His life of self-denial and sinless devotion was a perpetual reproof to a proud, sensual people. It was this that evoked enmity against the Son of God….

507.1 – The same enmity is manifested toward Christ's followers as was manifested toward their Master. Whoever sees the repulsive character of sin, and in strength from above resists temptation, will assuredly arouse the wrath of Satan and his subjects. Hatred of the pure principles of truth, and reproach and persecution of its advocates, will exist as long as sin and sinners remain. The followers of Christ and the servants of Satan cannot harmonize. The offense of the cross has not ceased…. The spirit which put Christ to death moves the wicked to destroy His followers… And this will continue to the close of time.

Why did the world hate Jesus?

Why is it important that Jesus' followers understand that they can expect the same treatment?

3. Read the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

507.2 – Satan's agents are constantly working under his direction to establish his authority and build up his kingdom in opposition to the government of God. To this end they seek to deceive Christ's followers and allure them from their allegiance. Like their leader, they misconstrue and pervert the Scriptures to accomplish their object. As Satan endeavored to cast reproach upon God, so do his agents seek to malign God's people.

How does Satan work to build-up his kingdom?

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507.3 – Satan summons all his forces and throws his whole power into the combat. Why is it that he meets with no greater resistance? Why are the soldiers of Christ so sleepy and indifferent? Because they have so little real connection with Christ; because they are so destitute of His Spirit. Sin is not to them repulsive and abhorrent, as it was to their Master. They do not meet it, as did Christ, with decisive and determined resistance. They do not realize the exceeding evil and malignity of sin, and they are blinded both to the character and the power of the prince of darkness. There is little enmity against Satan and his works, because there is so great ignorance concerning his power and malice, and the vast extent of his warfare against Christ and His church. Multitudes are deluded here. They do not know that their enemy is a mighty general who controls the minds of evil angels, and that with well-matured plans and skillful movements he is warring against Christ to prevent the salvation of souls. Among professed Christians, and even among ministers of the gospel, there is heard scarcely a reference to Satan, except perhaps an incidental mention in the pulpit. They overlook the evidences of his continual activity and success; they neglect the many warnings of his subtlety; they seem to ignore his very existence.

Why does Satan meet with so little resistance?

508.1 – While men are ignorant of his devices, this vigilant foe is upon their track every moment. He is intruding his presence in every department of the household, in every street of our cities, in the churches, in the national councils, in the courts of justice, perplexing, deceiving, seducing, everywhere ruining the souls and bodies of men, women, and children, breaking up families, sowing hatred, emulation, strife, sedition, murder. And the Christian world seem to regard these things as though God had appointed them and they must exist.

While men are ignorant of Satan, what is he doing?

4. Read Exodus 34:12-16; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 and the following GC paragraphs:

508.2 – Satan is continually seeking to overcome the people of God by breaking down the barriers which separate them from the world. Ancient Israel were enticed into sin when they ventured into forbidden association with the heathen. In a similar manner are modern Israel led astray… All who are not decided followers of Christ are servants of Satan. In the unregenerate heart there is love of sin and a disposition to cherish and excuse it. In the renewed heart there is hatred of sin and determined resistance against it. When Christians choose the society of the ungodly and unbelieving, they expose themselves to temptation. Satan conceals himself from view and stealthily draws his deceptive covering over their eyes. They cannot see that such company is calculated to do them harm; and while all the time assimilating to the world in character, words, and actions, they are becoming more and more blinded.

509.1 – Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world; it never converts the world to Christ. Familiarity with sin will inevitably cause it to appear less repulsive. He who chooses to associate with the

servants of Satan will soon cease to fear their master. When in the way of duty we are brought into trial, as was Daniel in the king's court, we may be sure that God will protect us; but if we place ourselves under temptation we shall fall sooner or later.

How does Satan seek to overcome the people of God?

What is the difference between the unregenerate and the renewed heart?

What will happen if we continue to play in Satan's sandbox?

5. Read 1 Kings 4:29-34; 11:1-11; Matthew 10:16 and the following GC paragraphs:

509.2 – The tempter often works most successfully through those who are least suspected of being under his control. The possessors of talent and education are admired and honored, as if these qualities could atone for the absence of the fear of God or entitle men to His favor. Talent and culture, considered in themselves, are gifts of God; but when these are made to supply the place of piety, when, instead of bringing the soul nearer to God, they lead away from Him, then they become a curse and a snare. The opinion prevails with many that all which appears like courtesy or refinement must, in some sense, pertain to Christ. Never was there a greater mistake. These qualities should grace the character of every Christian, for they would exert a powerful influence in favor of true religion; but they must be consecrated to God, or they also are a power for evil. Many a man of cultured intellect and pleasant manners, who would not stoop to what is commonly regarded as an immoral act, is but a polished instrument in the hands of Satan. The insidious, deceptive character of his influence and example renders him a more dangerous enemy to the cause of Christ than are those who are ignorant and uncultured.

509.3 – By earnest prayer and dependence upon God, Solomon obtained the wisdom which excited the wonder and admiration of the world. But when he turned from the Source of his strength, and went forward relying upon himself, he fell a prey to temptation. Then the marvelous powers bestowed on this wisest of kings only rendered him a more effective agent of the adversary of souls.

Why is discernment important in regard to qualities the world sees as *"good"*?

Who is given as an example of the danger in perverting these qualities?

6. Read Matthew 4:1-11; Romans 8:37; Ephesians 6:10-24 and the following GC paragraphs:

510.2 – From the days of Adam to our own time, our great enemy has been exercising his power to oppress and destroy. He is now preparing for his last campaign against the church. All who seek to follow Jesus will be brought into conflict with this relentless foe. The more nearly the Christian imitates the divine Pattern, the more surely will he make himself a mark for the attacks of Satan….

510.3 – Satan assailed Christ with his fiercest and most subtle temptations, but he was repulsed in every conflict. Those battles were fought in our behalf; those victories make it possible for us to conquer. Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan.

What can the follower of Christ expect from Satan?

What assurances are we given to encourage and sustain us in the closing conflict?

Early Christianity

Lesson 2

The Destruction of Jerusalem

(see chapter 1)

1. Read Jeremiah 9:1-2; Matthew 23:37; Luke 19:28-44 and the following GC paragraphs:

17.2 – From the crest of Olivet, Jesus looked upon Jerusalem. Fair and peaceful was the scene spread out before Him. It was the season of the Passover, and from all lands the children of Jacob had gathered there to celebrate the great national festival. In the midst of gardens and vineyards, and green slopes studded with pilgrims' tents, rose the terraced hills, the stately palaces, and massive bulwarks of Israel's capital…. In full view were the magnificent buildings of the temple. The rays of the setting sun lighted up the snowy whiteness of its marble walls and gleamed from golden gate and tower and pinnacle. *"The perfection of beauty"* it stood, the pride of the Jewish nation. What child of Israel could gaze upon the scene without a thrill of joy and admiration! But far other thoughts occupied the mind of Jesus…. Amid the universal rejoicing of the triumphal entry, while palm branches waved, while glad hosannas awoke the echoes of the hills, and thousands of voices declared Him king, the world's Redeemer was overwhelmed with a sudden and mysterious sorrow. He, the Son of God, the Promised One of Israel, whose power had conquered death and called its captives from the grave, was in tears, not of ordinary grief, but of intense, irrepressible agony.

18.1 – His tears were not for Himself, though He well knew whither His feet were tending. Before Him lay Gethsemane, the scene of His approaching agony. The sheepgate also was in sight, through which for centuries the victims for sacrifice had been led, and which was to open for Him when He should be *"brought as a lamb to the slaughter."* Isaiah 53:7. Not far distant was Calvary, the place of crucifixion…. Yet it was not the contemplation of these scenes that cast the shadow upon Him in this hour of gladness…. He wept for the doomed thousands of Jerusalem – because of the blindness and impenitence of those whom He came to bless and to save.

21.1 – Prophets had wept over the apostasy of Israel and the terrible desolations by which their sins were visited…. What, then, was the grief of Him whose prophetic glance took in, not years, but ages! He beheld the destroying angel with sword uplifted against the city which had so long been Jehovah's dwelling place. From the ridge of Olivet, the very spot afterward occupied by Titus and his army, He looked across the valley upon the sacred courts and porticoes, and with tear-dimmed eyes He saw, in awful perspective, the walls surrounded by alien hosts. He heard the tread of armies marshaling for war. He heard the voice of mothers and children crying for bread in the besieged city. He saw her holy and beautiful house, her palaces and towers, given to the flames, and where once they stood, only a heap of smoldering ruins.

21.2 – Looking down the ages, He saw the covenant people scattered in every land…. In the temporal retribution about to fall upon her children, He saw but the first draft from that cup of wrath which at the final judgment she must drain to its dregs…..

Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem?

2. Read Mark 13:1-2; John 17:15-20; 1 Peter 2:11-12; 1 John 2:15-17 and the following GC paragraphs:

22.1 – Christ saw in Jerusalem a symbol of the world hardened in unbelief and rebellion, and hastening on to meet the retributive judgments of God. The woes of a fallen race, pressing upon His soul, forced from His lips that exceeding bitter cry. He saw the record of sin traced in human misery, tears, and blood; His heart was moved with infinite pity for the afflicted and suffering ones of earth; He yearned to relieve them all. But even His hand might not turn back the tide of human woe; few would seek their only Source of help. He was willing to pour out His soul unto death, to bring salvation within their reach; but few would come to Him that they might have life.

36.2 – The Saviour's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon His law. Dark are the records of human misery that earth has witnessed during its long centuries of crime. The heart sickens, and the mind grows faint in contemplation. Terrible have been the results of rejecting the authority of Heaven. But a scene yet darker is presented in the revelations of the future. The records of the past – the long procession of tumults, conflicts, and revolutions – what are these, in contrast with the terrors of that day when the restraining Spirit of God shall be wholly withdrawn from the wicked, no longer to hold in check the outburst of human passion and satanic wrath! The world will then behold, as never before, the results of Satan's rule.

What did Jesus see in the destruction of Jerusalem?

Understanding the destiny of those who cling to the world, how should Christians view their place in the world?

3. Read Micah 3:9-12; Hosea 13:9; 14:1; John 11:48-50 and the following GC paragraphs:

27.1 – These words faithfully described the corrupt and self-righteous inhabitants of Jerusalem. While claiming to observe rigidly the precepts of God's law, they were transgressing all its principles. They hated Christ because His purity and holiness revealed their iniquity; and they accused Him of being the cause of all the troubles which had come upon them in consequence of their sins. Though they knew Him to be sinless, they had declared that His death was necessary to their safety as a nation.... if Christ were sacrificed, they might once more become a strong, united people. Thus they reasoned, and they concurred in the decision of their high priest, that it would be better for one man to die than for the whole nation to perish.

27.2 – .... And yet, while they slew their Saviour because He reproved their sins, such was their self-righteousness that they regarded themselves as God's favored people and expected the Lord to deliver them from their enemies....

35.3 – The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown…. Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control.

How did Micah and Hosea's prophecies find their fulfillment?

Who was really responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem?

What does the destruction of Jerusalem demonstrate?

4. Read Genesis 6:5-6; Jeremiah 8:6-18; Matthew 24:37-39; Mark 13:23-29; Luke 21:20-24; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; Revelation 6:12-17 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

30.2 – Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given His disciples warning, and all who believed His words watched for the promised sign…. After the Romans under Cestius had surrounded the city, they unexpectedly abandoned the siege when everything seemed favorable for an immediate attack. The besieged, despairing of successful resistance, were on the point of surrender, when the Roman general withdrew his forces without the least apparent reason. But God's merciful providence was directing events for the good of His own people. The promised sign had been given to the waiting Christians, and now an opportunity was offered for all who would, to obey the Saviour's warning. Events were so overruled that neither Jews nor Romans should hinder the flight of the Christians. Upon the retreat of Cestius, the Jews, sallying from Jerusalem, pursued after his retiring army; and while both forces were thus fully engaged, the Christians had an opportunity to leave the city. At this time the country also had been cleared of enemies who might have endeavored to intercept them…. and thus, the Christians throughout the land were able to make their escape unmolested….

How is it that Christ's followers escaped the destruction of Jerusalem?

37.2 – Let men beware lest they neglect the lesson conveyed to them in the words of Christ. As He warned His disciples of Jerusalem's destruction, giving them a sign of the approaching ruin, that they might make their

escape; so He has warned the world of the day of final destruction and has given them tokens of its approach, that all who will may flee from the wrath to come.... They that heed the warning shall not be left in darkness, that that day should overtake them unawares....

What can modern Christians learn from their example?

36.1 – We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty.

To whom does the world owe its peace and protection?

What are the consequences of rejecting that protection?

38.1 – The world is no more ready to credit the message for this time than were the Jews to receive the Saviour's warning concerning Jerusalem. Come when it may, the day of God will come unawares to the ungodly. When life is going on in its unvarying round; when men are absorbed in pleasure, in business, in traffic, in money-making; when religious leaders are magnifying the world's progress and enlightenment, and the people are lulled in a false security – then, as the midnight thief steals within the unguarded dwelling, so shall sudden destruction come upon the careless and ungodly....

Despite all the warnings, what will be the overall condition of the world leading up to the close of probation?

Lesson 3

Persecution in the 1st Centuries

(see chapter 2)

1. Read Matthew 5:10-11; 10:22; 24:9, 21-22; Luke 6:22-23; Acts 1:8; 8:1; 2 Timothy 3:12; 4:6-8 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

39.1 – When Jesus revealed to His disciples the fate of Jerusalem and the scenes of the second advent, He foretold also the experience of His people from the time when He should be taken from them, to His return in power and glory for their deliverance…. In a few brief utterances of awful significance He foretold the portion which the rulers of this world would mete out to the church of God. The followers of Christ must tread the same path of humiliation, reproach, and suffering which their Master trod. The enmity that burst forth against the world's Redeemer would be manifested against all who should believe on His name.

39.2 – The history of the early church testified to the fulfillment of the Saviour's words. The powers of earth and hell arrayed themselves against Christ in the person of His followers. Paganism foresaw that should the gospel triumph, her temples and altars would be swept away; therefore she summoned her forces to destroy Christianity. The fires of persecution were kindled. Christians were stripped of their possessions and driven from their homes…. Great numbers sealed their testimony with their blood. Noble and slave, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, were alike slain without mercy.

40.1 – These persecutions, beginning under Nero about the time of the martyrdom of Paul, continued with greater or less fury for centuries.

40.2 – Wherever they sought refuge, the followers of Christ were hunted like beasts of prey. They were forced to seek concealment in desolate and solitary places.

How does understanding the above prepare Christians for the future?

41.1 – Under the fiercest persecution these witnesses for Jesus kept their faith unsullied. Though deprived of every comfort, shut away from the light of the sun, making their home in the dark but friendly bosom of the earth, they uttered no complaint. With words of faith, patience, and hope they encouraged one another to endure privation and distress. The loss of every earthly blessing could not force them to renounce their belief in Christ. Trials and persecution were but steps bringing them nearer their rest and their reward.

41.2 – These called to mind the words of their Master, that when persecuted for Christ's sake, they were to be exceeding glad, for great would be their reward in heaven; for so the prophets had been persecuted before them. They rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the truth, and songs of triumph ascended from the midst of crackling flames. Looking upward by faith, they saw Christ and angels leaning over the battlements of heaven, gazing upon them with the deepest interest and regarding their steadfastness with approval….

How should Christians view persecution?

41.3 – The great controversy in which the disciples of Jesus yielded up their lives did not cease when these faithful standard-bearers fell at their post. By defeat they conquered. God's workmen were slain, but His work went steadily forward. The gospel continued to spread and the number of its adherents to increase. It penetrated into regions that were inaccessible even to the eagles of Rome.

42.1- Thousands were imprisoned and slain, but others sprang up to fill their places. And those who were martyred for their faith were secured to Christ and accounted of Him as conquerors. They had fought the good fight, and they were to receive the crown of glory when Christ should come. The sufferings which they endured brought Christians nearer to one another and to their Redeemer. Their living example and dying testimony were a constant witness for the truth; and where least expected, the subjects of Satan were leaving his service and enlisting under the banner of Christ.

How did persecution prove to be a blessing?

2. Read 2 Timothy 3:1-6; 2 Peter 2:1-3; Jude 4, 10-13, 16-19 and the following GC paragraphs:

42.2 – Satan therefore laid his plans to war more successfully against the government of God by planting his banner in the Christian church. If the followers of Christ could be deceived and led to displease God, then their strength, fortitude, and firmness would fail, and they would fall an easy prey.

42.3 – The great adversary now endeavored to gain by artifice what he had failed to secure by force. Persecution ceased, and in its stead were substituted the dangerous allurements of temporal prosperity and worldly honor. Idolaters were led to receive a part of the Christian faith, while they rejected other essential truths. They professed to accept Jesus as the Son of God and to believe in His death and resurrection, but they had no conviction of sin and felt no need of repentance or of a change of heart. With some concessions on their part they proposed that Christians should make concessions, that all might unite on the platform of belief in Christ.

42.4 – Now the church was in fearful peril. Prison, torture, fire, and sword were blessings in comparison with this…. Under a cloak of pretended Christianity, Satan was insinuating himself into the church, to corrupt their faith and turn their minds from the word of truth.

45.1 – None understood so well how to oppose the true Christian faith as did those who had once been its defenders; and these apostate Christians, uniting with their half-pagan companions, directed their warfare against the most essential features of the doctrines of Christ.

46.1 – The opinion is gaining ground, that, after all, these are not of vital importance. This degeneracy is strengthening the hands of the agents of Satan, so that false theories and fatal delusions which the faithful in ages past imperiled their lives to resist and expose, are now regarded with favor by thousands who claim to be followers of Christ.

How did Satan respond and was his new strategy successful?

How do we avoid the corrupting influence of Pretend Christians? (Read Psalm 119:30-37; Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 6)

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3. Read the following GC paragraph and discuss:

48.3 – There is another and more important question that should engage the attention of the churches of today. The apostle Paul declares that *"all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."* 2 Timothy 3:12. Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world's standard and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled.

The Dark Ages

Lesson 4

An Era of Spiritual Darkness

(see Chapter 3)

1. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 and the following GC paragraphs:

49.1 – The apostle Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, foretold the great apostasy which would result in the establishment of the papal power..... Even at that early date he saw, creeping into the church, errors that would prepare the way for the development of the papacy.

49.2 – Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church. The spirit of compromise and conformity was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions....

50.1 – This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of "the man of sin" foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power--a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will.

How does compromise occur and why is it so dangerous – both for the Christian and the corporate church?

2. Psalm 26:3; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and the following GC paragraphs:

51.3 – Satan well knew that the Holy Scriptures would enable men to discern his deceptions and withstand his power.... In order for Satan to maintain his sway over men, and establish the authority of the papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the Scriptures. The Bible would exalt God and place finite men in their true position; therefore its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. For hundreds of years the circulation of the Bible was prohibited. The people were forbidden to read it or to have it in their houses, and unprincipled priests and prelates interpreted its teachings to sustain their pretensions. Thus the pope came to be almost universally acknowledged as the vicegerent of God on earth, endowed with authority over church and state.

How do we guard against compromise?

3. Read Genesis 2:2-3; Daniel 7:25; Luke 21:16-17; Revelation 12:6, 14 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

51.4 – …. To afford converts from heathenism a substitute for the worship of idols, and thus to promote their nominal acceptance of Christianity, the adoration of images and relics was gradually introduced into the Christian worship. The decree of a general council finally established this system of idolatry. To complete the sacrilegious work, Rome presumed to expunge from the law of God the second commandment, forbidding image worship, and to divide the tenth commandment, in order to preserve the number.

Roman Catholic Version	Protestant (Biblical) Version
1. I am the Lord thy God...Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.	1. I am the Lord thy God...Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.	2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.
3. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.	3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.	4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Thou shalt not kill.	5. Honor thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.	6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not steal.	7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.	8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.	9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.	10. Thou shalt not covet.

52.1 – The spirit of concession to paganism opened the way for a still further disregard of Heaven's authority. Satan, working through unconsecrated leaders of the church, tampered with the fourth commandment also, and essayed to set aside the ancient Sabbath, the day which God had blessed and sanctified and in its stead to exalt the festival observed by the heathen as *"the venerable day of the sun."* …. That the attention of the people might be called to the Sunday, it was made a festival in honor of the resurrection of Christ. Religious services were held upon it; yet it was regarded as a day of recreation, the Sabbath being still sacredly observed.

- *"Nowhere in the Bible do we find that Christ or the Apostles ordered that the Sabbath be changed from Saturday to Sunday. We have the commandment of God given to Moses to keep holy the Sabbath day, that is the 7th day of the week, Saturday. Today most Christians keep Sunday because it has been revealed to us by the [Roman Catholic] church outside the Bible" ("To Tell You the Truth," The Catholic Virginian, Oct. 3, 1947, p. 9).*
- *Q: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?*

  A: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea, transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday" (Peter Geiermann, The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, 1957, p. 50).

How did Satan use the authority and traditions of men to change *"times and laws"* and blind people to the truth found in scripture?

How can Christians today protect themselves from falling into the same trap?

54.2 – By the 6th century the papacy had become firmly established..... And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman's ax.... Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before, and the world became a vast battlefield. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity.

55.1 – The accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the Dark Ages. As her power increased, the darkness deepened. Faith was transferred from Christ, the true foundation, to the pope of Rome. Instead of trusting in the Son of God for forgiveness of sins and for eternal salvation, the people looked to the pope, and to the priests and prelates to whom he delegated authority. They were taught that the pope was their earthly mediator and that none could approach God except through him; and, further, that he stood in the place of God to them and was therefore to be implicitly obeyed. A deviation from his requirements was sufficient cause for the severest punishment to be visited upon the bodies and souls of the offenders. Thus the minds of the people were turned away from God to fallible, erring, and cruel men, nay, more, to the prince of darkness himself, who exercised his power through them. Sin was disguised in a garb of sanctity. When the Scriptures are suppressed, and man comes to regard himself as supreme, we need look only for fraud, deception, and debasing iniquity. With the elevation of human laws and traditions was manifest the corruption that ever results from setting aside the law of God.

What happened to those who chose against the established church?

How did the Church of Rome turn the peoples minds away from God?

When men come regard themselves as supreme what 3 qualities will become evident?

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Lesson 5

The Waldenses

(see Chapter 4)

1. Read the following GC paragraphs:

61.1 – Amid the gloom that settled upon the earth during the long period of papal supremacy, the light of truth could not be wholly extinguished. In every age there were witnesses for God – men who cherished faith in Christ as the only mediator between God and man, who held the Bible as the only rule of life, and who hallowed the true Sabbath. How much the world owes to these men, posterity will never know. They were branded as heretics, their motives impugned, their characters maligned, their writings suppressed, misrepresented, or mutilated. Yet they stood firm, and from age to age maintained their faith in its purity, as a sacred heritage for the generations to come.

61.2 – It was the policy of Rome to obliterate every trace of dissent from her doctrines or decrees. Everything heretical, whether persons or writings, she sought to destroy. Expressions of doubt, or questions as to the authority of papal dogmas, were enough to forfeit the life of rich or poor, high or low. Rome endeavored also to destroy every record of her cruelty toward dissenters. Papal councils decreed that books and writings containing such records should be committed to the flames….

What was the policy of Rome regarding dissent?

2. Read Deuteronomy 11:18-21; Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 11:38-40 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

64.1 – But of those who resisted the encroachments of the papal power, the Waldenses stood foremost. In the very land where popery had fixed its seat, there its falsehood and corruption were most steadfastly resisted. For centuries the churches of Piedmont maintained their independence; but the time came at last when Rome insisted upon their submission. After ineffectual struggles against her tyranny, the leaders of these churches reluctantly acknowledged the supremacy of the power to which the whole world seemed to pay homage. There were some, however, who refused to yield to the authority of pope or prelate. They were determined to maintain their allegiance to God and to preserve the purity and simplicity of their faith. A separation took place. Those who adhered to the ancient faith now withdrew; some, forsaking their native Alps, raised the banner of truth in foreign lands; others retreated to the secluded glens and rocky fastnesses of the mountains, and there preserved their freedom to worship God.

65.2 – The Waldenses were among the first of the peoples of Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures. Hundreds of years before the Reformation they possessed the Bible in manuscript in their native tongue. They had the truth unadulterated, and this rendered them the special objects of hatred and persecution…. Under the fiercest tempests of opposition they maintained their faith. Though gashed by the Savoyard spear, and scorched by the Romish fagot, they stood unflinchingly for God's word and His honor.

65.3 – Behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains …. the Waldenses found a hiding place. Here the light of truth was kept burning amid the darkness of the Middle Ages. Here, for a thousand years, witnesses for the truth maintained the ancient faith.

How did the Waldenses respond to Rome's demand for allegiance?

67.1 – Pure, simple, and fervent was the piety of these followers of Christ. The principles of truth they valued above houses and lands, friends, kindred, even life itself. These principles they earnestly sought to impress upon the hearts of the young. From earliest childhood the youth were instructed in the Scriptures and taught to regard sacredly the claims of the law of God. Copies of the Bible were rare; therefore its precious words were committed to memory….

What can we learn from the Waldenses in regarding to teaching our children about God?

69.1 – By patient, untiring labor, sometimes in the deep, dark caverns of the earth, by the light of torches, the Sacred Scriptures were written out, verse by verse, chapter by chapter. Thus the work went on, the revealed will of God shining out like pure gold; how much brighter, clearer, and more powerful because of the trials undergone for its sake only those could realize who were engaged in the work. Angels from heaven surrounded these faithful workers.

69.2 – Satan had urged on the papal priests and prelates to bury the word of truth beneath the rubbish of error, heresy, and superstition; but in a most wonderful manner it was preserved uncorrupted through all the ages of darkness…. God designed the Bible to be a lesson book to all mankind, in childhood, youth, and manhood, and to be studied through all time. He gave His word to men as a revelation of Himself. Every new truth discerned is a fresh disclosure of the character of its Author. The study of the Scriptures is the means divinely ordained to bring men into closer connection with their Creator and to give them a clearer knowledge of His will. It is the medium of communication between God and man.

72.1 – To the Waldenses the Scriptures were not merely a record of God's dealings with men in the past, and a revelation of the responsibilities and duties of the present, but an unfolding of the perils and glories of the future. They believed that the end of all things was not far distant, and as they studied the Bible with prayer and tears they were the more deeply impressed with its precious utterances and with their duty to make known to others its saving truths. They saw the plan of salvation clearly revealed in the sacred pages, and they found comfort, hope, and peace in believing in Jesus. As the light illuminated their understanding and made glad their hearts, they longed to shed its beams upon those who were in the darkness of papal error.

What did God design the Bible to be?

What can the Waldenses devotion to Scripture teach us?

3. Read John 3:14-16; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 John 1:9 and the following GC paragraphs:

72.2 – They saw that under the guidance of pope and priest, multitudes were vainly endeavoring to obtain pardon by afflicting their bodies for the sin of their souls. Taught to trust to their good works to save them, they were ever looking to themselves, their minds dwelling upon their sinful condition, seeing themselves exposed to the wrath of God, afflicting soul and body, yet finding no relief. Thus conscientious souls were bound by the doctrines of Rome. Thousands abandoned friends and kindred, and spent their lives in convent cells. By oft-repeated fasts and cruel scourgings, by midnight vigils, by prostration for weary hours upon the cold, damp stones of their dreary abode, by long pilgrimages, by humiliating penance and fearful torture, thousands vainly sought to obtain peace of conscience. Oppressed with a sense of sin, and haunted with the fear of God's avenging wrath, many suffered on, until exhausted nature gave way, and without one ray of light or hope they sank into the tomb.

73.1 – The Waldenses longed to break to these starving souls the bread of life, to open to them the messages of peace in the promises of God, and to point them to Christ as their only hope of salvation. The doctrine that good works can atone for the transgression of God's law they held to be based upon falsehood. Reliance upon human merit intercepts the view of Christ's infinite love. Jesus died as a sacrifice for man because the fallen race can do nothing to recommend themselves to God. The merits of a crucified and risen Saviour are the foundation of the Christian's faith. The dependence of the soul upon Christ is as real, and its connection with Him must be as close, as that of a limb to the body, or of a branch to the vine.

Compare and contrast Righteous by Works and Righteousness by Faith.

Why is the philosophy of Righteousness by Works so dangerous?

4. Read the following GC paragraph:

73.2 – The teachings of popes and priests had led men to look upon the character of God, and even of Christ, as stern, gloomy, and forbidding. The Saviour was represented as so far devoid of sympathy with man in his fallen state that the mediation of priests and saints must be invoked. Those whose minds had been enlightened by the

word of God longed to point these souls to Jesus as their compassionate, loving Saviour, standing with outstretched arms, inviting all to come to Him with their burden of sin, their care and weariness. They longed to clear away the obstructions which Satan had piled up that men might not see the promises, and come directly to God, confessing their sins, and obtaining pardon and peace.

What can the Waldenses teach us about ministry to those who are mired in darkness?

5. Read Daniel 6:4-5; Matthew 24:9-13; 1 Peter 2:12, 19-23 and the following GC paragraphs:

76.3 – Again and again were their fertile lands laid waste, their dwellings and chapels swept away, so that where once were flourishing fields and the homes of an innocent, industrious people, there remained only a desert. As the ravenous beast is rendered more furious by the taste of blood, so the rage of the papists was kindled to greater intensity by the sufferings of their victims. Many of these witnesses for a pure faith were pursued across the mountains and hunted down in the valleys where they were hidden, shut in by mighty forests and pinnacles of rock.

76.4 – No charge could be brought against the moral character of this proscribed class. Even their enemies declared them to be a peaceable, quiet, pious people. Their grand offense was that they would not worship God according to the will of the pope. For this crime every humiliation, insult, and torture that men or devils could invent was heaped upon them.

78.1 – The persecutions visited for many centuries upon this God-fearing people were endured by them with a patience and constancy that honored their Redeemer. Notwithstanding the crusades against them, and the inhuman butchery to which they were subjected, they continued to send out their missionaries to scatter the precious truth. They were hunted to death; yet their blood watered the seed sown, and it failed not of yielding fruit.

Discuss the importance that a Christians' talk and walk be the same.

Also discuss the consequences – are they worth it?

Lesson 6

Wycliffe, Huss and Jerome

(see Chapters 5-6)

Read the following GC paragraphs and discuss the lives and legacies of these Great Men of Faith:

John Wycliffe

80.1 – In the 14th century (1300's) arose in England the *"morning star of the Reformation."* John Wycliffe was the herald of reform for all Christendom. The great protest against Rome… was never to be silenced….

80.2 – Wycliffe received a liberal education…. He was noted at college for his fervent piety as well as for his remarkable talents and sound scholarship. In his thirst for knowledge he sought to become acquainted with every branch of learning….. (including a study of the Scriptures).

80.3-81.1 – … In the word of God he found what he had been looking for. Here he saw the plan of salvation revealed and Christ set forth as the only advocate for man. He gave himself to the service of Christ and determined to proclaim the truths he had discovered.

81.2 – … Wycliffe did not set himself deliberately in opposition to Rome. But devotion to truth could not but bring him in conflict with falsehood. The more clearly he discerned the errors of the papacy, the more earnestly he presented the teaching of the Bible. He saw that Rome had forsaken the word of God for human tradition; he fearlessly accused the priesthood of having banished the Scriptures, and demanded that the Bible be restored to the people and that its authority be again established in the church. He was an able and earnest teacher and an eloquent preacher. His daily life was a demonstration of the truths he preached. His knowledge of the Scriptures, the force of his reasoning, the purity of his life, and his unbending courage and integrity won for him general esteem and confidence. Many of the people… hailed with unconcealed joy the truths brought to view by Wycliffe; but the papal leaders were filled with rage when they perceived that this Reformer was gaining an influence greater than their own.

82-83 – Wycliffe was a keen detector of error, and he struck fearlessly against many of the abuses sanctioned by the authority of Rome: "*papal assumption of authority over secular rulers"* and *"Idleness, beggary and corrupting power of the friars and monastic orders."*

84.3-85.2 – Appointed a royal ambassador, he spent two years in the Netherlands and was also brought into communication with ecclesiastics from France, Italy, and Spain… He returned to England to repeat his former teachings more openly and with greater zeal, declaring that covetousness, pride, and deception were the gods of Rome… Soon after, he received from the king the appointment to the rectory of Lutterworth…

85.3 – The papal thunders were soon hurled against him. 3 bulls (an edict issued by a pope) were dispatched to England calling for immediate and decisive measures to silence the teacher of heresy…. Before the arrival of the bulls, however, the bishops… summoned Wycliffe for trial. But two of the most powerful princes in the kingdom accompanied him to the tribunal; and the people, surrounding the building and rushing in, so intimidated the judges that the proceedings were for the time suspended, and he was allowed to go his way in peace….

86.1 – The arrival of the papal bulls laid upon all England a command for the arrest and imprisonment of the heretic. These measures pointed directly to the stake. It appeared certain that Wycliffe must soon fall a prey to the vengeance of Rome…. Death came, not to the Reformer, but to the pontiff who had decreed his destruction. Gregory XI died, and the ecclesiastics who had assembled for Wycliffe's trial, dispersed.

86.2-3 – …. The death of Gregory was followed by the election of two rival popes (Pope Urban VI in Rome and Pope Clement VII in Avignon). Two conflicting powers, both professing infallibility, claimed obedience…. This greatly weakened the power of the papacy…. and prepared the way for the Reformation by enabling the people to see what the papacy really was.

87.1-2 – Wycliffe, preached the gospel to the poor…. and in the halls of Oxford university….. But the greatest work of his life was to be the translation of the Scriptures into the English language.

87.3 – Suddenly his labors were stopped. Though not yet 60…. He was attacked by a dangerous illness. The news brought great joy to the friars…. (he did not repent and he did not die)

88.1-2 – He lived to place in the hands of his countrymen the most powerful of all weapons against Rome – the Bible, the Heaven-appointed agent to liberate, enlighten, and evangelize the people…… At last the work was completed – the first English translation of the Bible ever made. The word of God was opened to England…..

89.1 – …. Wycliffe now taught the distinctive doctrines of Protestantism – salvation through faith in Christ, and the sole infallibility of the Scriptures…. the new faith was accepted by nearly one half of the people of England.

89.2 – The appearance of the Scriptures brought dismay to the authorities of the church…. At this time there was no law in England prohibiting the Bible – later such laws were enacted and rigorously enforced. Despite the efforts of the priests, there was for a time opportunity for the circulation of the word of God.

90.4 – Wycliffe was summoned for trial before the papal tribunal at Rome… Knowing the danger, he would have obeyed summons had not palsy made it impossible for him to go on the journey…. Instead, he wrote a letter. While respectful in tone and Christian in spirit, was a keen rebuke to the pomp and pride of the papal see.

92.3-4 – Wycliffe fully expected that his life would be the price of his fidelity…. But his courage was unshaken… The man who for a whole lifetime had stood boldly in defense of the truth… was not to fall a victim of the hatred of its foes…. when his enemies felt sure of their prey, God's hand removed him beyond their reach…. as he was about to dispense the communion, he fell, stricken with palsy, and in a short time yielded up his life.

93.1 – Wycliffe came from the obscurity of the Dark Ages. There were none who went before him from whose work he could shape his system of reform. Raised up like John the Baptist to accomplish a special mission, he was the herald of a new era. Yet in the system of truth which he presented there was a unity and completeness which Reformers who followed him did not exceed, and which some did not reach, even a hundred years later. So broad and deep was laid the foundation, so firm and true was the framework, that it needed not to be reconstructed by those who came after him.

94.1 – … In breadth of intellect, in clearness of thought, in firmness to maintain the truth, and in boldness to defend it, he was equaled by few who came after him. Purity of life, unwearying diligence in study and in labor, incorruptible integrity, Christlike love and faithfulness in his ministry, characterized the first of the Reformers.

95.2 – The papists had failed to work their will with Wycliffe during his life, and their hatred could not be satisfied while his body rested quietly in the grave. By the decree of the Council of Constance, more than forty years after his death his bones were exhumed and publicly burned, and the ashes were thrown into a brook.

John Huss

98.1 – John Huss was of humble birth, and was early left an orphan by the death of his father. His pious mother, regarding education and the fear of God as the most valuable of possessions, sought to secure this heritage for her son. Huss studied at the provincial school, and then repaired to the university at Prague, receiving admission as a charity scholar…..

98.2 – Huss soon distinguished himself by his untiring application and rapid progress, while his blameless life and gentle, winning deportment gained him universal esteem. He was a sincere adherent of the Roman Church and an earnest seeker for the spiritual blessings which it professes to bestow…. After completing college, he entered the priesthood, and rapidly attaining to eminence, he soon became attached to the court of the king. He was also made professor and afterward rector of the university where he had received his education – his name was renowned throughout Europe.

99.1 – … Several years (later) he was appointed preacher of the chapel of Bethlehem. The founder of this chapel had advocated (for) the preaching of the Scriptures in the language of the people…. But there was great ignorance of the Bible, and the worst vices prevailed among the people of all ranks. These evils Huss unsparingly denounced, appealing to the word of God to enforce the principles of truth and purity which he inculcated.

99.2 – Jerome … on returning from England, brought with him the writings of Wycliffe. The queen of England (Anne 1366-1394), who had been a convert to Wycliffe's teachings, was a Bohemian princess, and through her influence the Reformer's works were widely circulated in her native country. These works Huss read with interest; he believed their author to be a sincere Christian and was inclined to regard with favor the reforms which he advocated….

99.3-100.1 – About this time there arrived in Prague two strangers from England, men of learning, who had received the light and had come to spread it in this distant land…. Being artists … they drew two pictures. One represented the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, the other a pontifical procession – the pope arrayed in his rich robes and triple crown, mounted upon a horse magnificently adorned, preceded by trumpeters and followed by cardinals and prelates in dazzling array….. The pictures made a deep impression on the mind of Huss and led him to a closer study of the Bible and of Wycliffe's writings. Though he was not prepared, even yet, to accept all the reforms advocated by Wycliffe, he saw more clearly the true character of the papacy, and with greater zeal denounced the pride, the ambition, and the corruption of the hierarchy.

100.3 – Tidings of the work at Prague were carried to Rome, and Huss was soon summoned to appear before the pope. To obey would be to expose himself to certain death. The king and queen of Bohemia (Wenceslas & Sofia), the university, members of the nobility, and officers of the government united in an appeal that Huss be permitted to remain at Prague and to answer at Rome by deputy. Instead of granting this request, the pope proceeded to the trial and condemnation of Huss, and then declared the city of Prague to be under **interdict (a decree prohibiting the administration of the sacraments to an individual or group of people).**

101.1 – In that age this sentence created widespread alarm…. It was believed that the gates of heaven were closed against the region smitten with an interdict; that until it should please the pope to remove the ban, the dead were shut out from the abodes of bliss…. Thus by measures which appealed to the imagination, Rome essayed to control the consciences of men.

101.2 – The city of Prague was filled with tumult. A large class denounced Huss as the cause of all their calamities and demanded that he be given up to the vengeance of Rome. To quiet the storm, the Reformer withdrew for a time to his native village…. Huss did not cease his labors, but traveled through the surrounding country, preaching to eager crowds. Thus the measures to which the pope resorted to suppress the gospel were causing it to be the more widely extended.

102.1 – "The mind of Huss, at this stage of his career, would seem to have been the scene of a painful conflict. Although the church was seeking to overwhelm him by her thunderbolts, he had not renounced her authority.... What Huss was warring against was the abuse of authority, not the principle itself. This brought on a terrible conflict between the convictions of his understanding and the claims of his conscience....

102.3 – Huss had stood alone in his labors; but now Jerome, who while in England had accepted the teachings of Wycliffe, joined in the work of reform. The two were hereafter united in their lives, and in death they were not to be divided. Brilliancy of genius, eloquence and learning were possessed in a pre-eminent degree by Jerome; but in those qualities which constitute real strength of character, Huss was the greater. His calm judgment served as a restraint upon the impulsive spirit of Jerome, who, with true humility, perceived his worth, and yielded to his counsels....

103.1 – God permitted great light to shine upon the minds of these chosen men, revealing to them many of the errors of Rome; but they did not receive all the light that was to be given to the world. Through these, His servants, God was leading the people out of darkness – step by step, as they could bear it....

103.2 – The schism in the church still continued. Three popes were now contending for the supremacy (The Pope of Rome, the Pope of Avignon and the Pope of Pisa) ..... With daily increasing boldness Huss thundered against the abominations which were tolerated in the name of religion; and the people openly accused the Romish leaders as the cause of the miseries that overwhelmed Christendom.

104.1 – Again the city of Prague seemed on the verge of a bloody conflict .... and was again placed under interdict, and Huss withdrew to his native village..... The testimony so faithfully borne from his loved chapel of Bethlehem was ended. He was to speak from a wider stage, to all Christendom, before laying down his life as a witness for the truth.

104.2-3 – To cure the evils that were distracting Europe, a general council was summoned to meet at Constance.... The chief objects to be accomplished by the council were to heal the schism in the church and to root out heresy. Hence the two antipopes were summoned to appear before it, as well as the leading propagator of the new opinions, John Huss.

106.2 – Upon arriving at Constance, Huss was granted full liberty.... But, in violation of these solemn and repeated declarations, the Reformer was in a short time arrested, by order of the pope and cardinals, and thrust into a loathsome dungeon. Later he was transferred to a strong castle across the Rhine and there kept a prisoner. The pope, profiting little by his perfidy, was soon after committed to the same prison.....

107.1 – .... The imprisonment of Huss excited great indignation in Bohemia.... But the enemies of the Reformer were malignant and determined.

107.2-3 – Enfeebled by illness and imprisonment, Huss was at last brought before the council. Loaded with chains he stood in the presence of the emperor, whose honor and good faith had been pledged to protect him. During his long trial he firmly maintained the truth, and in the presence of the assembled dignitaries of church and state he uttered a solemn and faithful protest against the corruptions of the hierarchy. When required to choose whether he would recant his doctrines or suffer death, he accepted the martyr's fate.... The grace of God sustained him. During the weeks of suffering that passed before his final sentence, heaven's peace filled his soul.

108.2 – For the last time, Huss was brought before the council. It was a vast and brilliant assembly.... From all parts of Christendom had been gathered the witnesses of this first great sacrifice in the long struggle by which liberty of conscience was to be secured.

108.3-4 – Being called upon for his final decision, Huss declared his refusal to abjure, and, fixing his penetrating glance upon the monarch whose plighted word had been so shamelessly violated, he declared: *"I determined, of*

my own free will, to appear before this council, under the public protection and faith of the emperor here present." … Being again exhorted to retract, he replied, turning toward the people: *"With what face, then, should I behold the heavens? How should I look on those multitudes of men to whom I have preached the pure gospel? No; I esteem their salvation more than this poor body, now appointed unto death."* ….

109.2 – He was now delivered up to the secular authorities and led away to the place of execution…. When he had been fastened to the stake, and all was ready for the fire to be lighted, the martyr was once more exhorted to save himself by renouncing his errors. *"What errors,"* said Huss, *"shall I renounce? I know myself guilty of none. I call God to witness that all that I have written and preached has been with the view of rescuing souls from sin and perdition; and, therefore, most joyfully will I confirm with my blood that truth which I have written and preached."* When the flames kindled about him, he began to sing, *"Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me,"* and so continued till his voice was silenced forever.

110.1 – When the body of Huss had been wholly consumed, his ashes, with the soil upon which they rested, were gathered up and cast into the Rhine, and thus borne onward to the ocean…. Huss was no more, but the truths for which he died could never perish. His example of faith and constancy would encourage multitudes to stand firm for the truth, in the face of torture and death. His execution had exhibited to the whole world the perfidious cruelty of Rome. The enemies of truth, though they knew it not, had been furthering the cause which they vainly sought to destroy.

Jerome

110.2 – Yet another stake was to be set up at Constance. The blood of another witness must testify for the truth. Jerome, upon bidding farewell to Huss on his departure for the council, had exhorted him to courage and firmness, declaring that if he should fall into any peril, he himself would fly to his assistance. Upon hearing of the Reformer's imprisonment, the faithful disciple immediately prepared to fulfill his promise. Without a safe-conduct he set out, with a single companion, for Constance. On arriving there he was convinced that he had only exposed himself to peril, without the possibility of doing anything for the deliverance of Huss. He fled from the city, but was arrested on the homeward journey and brought back loaded with fetters and under the custody of a band of soldiers…. He was thrown into a dungeon, chained in a position which caused him great suffering, and fed on bread and water. After some months the cruelties of his imprisonment brought upon Jerome an illness that threatened his life, and his enemies, fearing that he might escape them, treated him with less severity, though he remained in prison for one year.

111.1 – The death of Huss had not resulted as the papists had hoped. The violation of his safe-conduct had roused a storm of indignation, and as the safer course, the council determined, instead of burning Jerome, to force him, if possible, to retract. He was brought before the assembly, and offered the alternative to recant, or to die at the stake. Death at the beginning of his imprisonment would have been a mercy in comparison with the terrible sufferings which he had undergone; but now, weakened by illness, by the rigors of his prison house, and the torture of anxiety and suspense, separated from his friends, and disheartened by the death of Huss, Jerome's fortitude gave way, and he consented to submit to the council….

111.2 – Jerome endeavored to silence the voice of conscience and escape his doom. But in the solitude of his dungeon he saw more clearly what he had done. He thought of the courage and fidelity of Huss, and in contrast pondered upon his own denial of the truth. He thought of the divine Master whom he had pledged himself to serve, and who for his sake endured the death of the cross. Before his retraction he had found comfort, amid all his sufferings, in the assurance of God's favor; but now remorse and doubts tortured his soul…. The path upon which he was entering could end only in complete apostasy. His resolution was taken: To escape a brief period of suffering he would not deny his Lord….

112.2 – He renounced his former recantation…. Fearing the effect of his words, the prelates insisted that he should merely affirm or deny the truth of the charges brought against him. Jerome protested against such cruelty and injustice. *"You have held me shut up 340 days in a frightful prison,"* he said, *"in the midst of filth, noisomeness, stench, and the utmost want of everything; you then bring me out before you, and lending an ear to my mortal enemies, you refuse to hear me…. If you be really wise men, and the lights of the world, take care not to sin against justice. As to me, I am only a feeble mortal; my life is but of little importance; and when I exhort you not to deliver an unjust sentence, I speak less for myself than for you."*

112.3-4 – … In the presence of his judges, Jerome kneeled down and prayed that the divine Spirit might control his thoughts and words, that he might speak nothing contrary to the truth or unworthy of his Master…. The words of Jerome excited astonishment and admiration, even in his enemies. For a year he had been confined in a dungeon, unable to read or even to see, in great physical suffering and mental anxiety. Yet his arguments were presented with as much clearness and power as if he had had undisturbed opportunity for study….

113.1 – At his retraction, Jerome had assented to the justice of the sentence condemning Huss; he now declared his repentance and bore witness to the innocence and holiness of the martyr. *"I knew him from his childhood,"* he said. *"He was a most excellent man, just and holy; he was condemned, notwithstanding his innocence…. I also – am ready to die: I will not recoil before the torments that are prepared for me by my enemies and false witnesses, who will one day have to render an account of their impostures before the great God, whom nothing can deceive."*

113.2 – In self-reproach for his own denial of the truth, Jerome continued: *"Of all the sins that I have committed since my youth, none weigh so heavily on my mind, and cause me such poignant remorse, as that which I committed in this fatal place, when I approved of the iniquitous sentence rendered against Wycliffe, and against the holy martyr, John Huss, my master and my friend. Yes! I confess it from my heart, and declare with horror that I disgracefully quailed when, through a dread of death, I condemned their doctrines. I therefore supplicate… Almighty God to deign to pardon me my sins, and this one in particular, the most heinous of all."* Pointing to his judges, he said firmly: *"You condemned Wycliffe and John Huss, not for having shaken the doctrine of the church, but simply because they branded with reprobation the scandals proceeding from the clergy – their pomp, their pride, and all the vices of the prelates and priests. The things which they have affirmed, and which are irrefutable, I also think and declare, like them."*

114.2-3 – Again the storm of rage burst out, and Jerome was hurried away to prison. Yet there were some in the assembly upon whom his words had made a deep impression and who desired to save his life. He was visited by dignitaries of the church and urged to submit himself to the council…. But like his Master when offered the glory of the world, Jerome remained steadfast.

114.8 – Erelong sentence of condemnation was passed upon him. He was led out to the same spot upon which Huss had yielded up his life. He went singing on his way, his countenance lighted up with joy and peace. His gaze was fixed upon Christ, and to him death had lost its terrors. When the executioner, about to kindle the pile, stepped behind him, the martyr exclaimed: *"Come forward boldly; apply the fire before my face. Had I been afraid, I should not be here."*

115.1 – His last words, uttered as the flames rose about him, were a prayer. *"Lord, Almighty Father," he cried, "have pity on me, and pardon me my sins; for Thou knowest that I have always loved Thy truth."* His voice ceased, but his lips continued to move in prayer. When the fire had done its work, the ashes of the martyr, with the earth upon which they rested, were gathered up, and like those of Huss, were thrown into the Rhine.

115.2 – So perished God's faithful light bearers. But the light of the truths which they proclaimed – the light of their heroic example – could not be extinguished. As well might men attempt to turn back the sun in its course as to prevent the dawning of that day which was even then breaking upon the world.

The Reformation

Lesson 7

Luther and Zwingli

(see Chapters 7- 9)

Read the following GC paragraphs and discuss the lives and legacies of these Great Men of the Reformation:

Martin Luther

120.1 – Foremost among those who were called to lead the church from the darkness of popery into the light of a purer faith, stood Martin Luther. Zealous, ardent, and devoted, knowing no fear but the fear of God, and acknowledging no foundation for religious faith but the Holy Scriptures, Luther was the man for his time; through him God accomplished a great work for the reformation of the church and the enlightenment of the world.

120.2 – … Luther sprang from the ranks of poverty. His early years were spent in the humble home of a German peasant…. Hardship, privation, and severe discipline were the school in which Infinite Wisdom prepared Luther for the important mission of his life.

121.4 & 122.2 – At the age of eighteen, he entered the University of Erfurt…. While one day examining the books in the library of the university, Luther discovered a Latin Bible.... Now, for the first time, he looked upon the whole of God's word. With mingled awe and wonder he turned the sacred pages; with quickened pulse and throbbing heart he read for himself the words of life…. Angels of heaven were by his side, and rays of light from the throne of God revealed the treasures of truth to his understanding. He had ever feared to offend God, but now the deep conviction of his condition as a sinner took hold upon him as never before.

123.1-2 – An earnest desire to be free from sin and to find peace with God led him at last to enter a cloister and devote himself to a monastic life…. Every moment that could be spared from his daily duties he employed in study, robbing himself of sleep and grudging even the time spent at his scanty meals. Above everything else he delighted in the study of God's word…. As his convictions of sin deepened, he sought by his own works to obtain pardon and peace. He led a most rigorous life, endeavoring by fasting, vigils, and scourgings to subdue the evils of his nature, from which the monastic life had brought no release…. As the result of this painful discipline he lost strength and suffered from fainting spasms, from the effects of which he never fully recovered. But his soul found no relief…

123.3 – When it appeared to Luther that all was lost, God raised up a friend and helper for him. The pious Staupitz opened the word of God to Luther's mind and bade him look away from himself, cease the contemplation of infinite punishment for the violation of God's law, and look to Jesus, his sin-pardoning Saviour…. His words made a deep impression upon Luther's mind. After many a struggle with long-cherished errors, he was enabled to grasp the truth, and peace came to his troubled soul.

124.1 – Luther was ordained a priest and was called from the cloister to a professorship in the University of Wittenberg. Here he began to lecture upon the Bible….. His eloquence captivated his hearers, the clearness and power with which he presented the truth convinced their understanding, and his fervor touched their hearts.

124.2-3 – Luther was still a true son of the papal church and had no thought that he would ever be anything else. In the providence of God he was led to visit Rome…. At a convent in Italy he was filled with wonder at the wealth, magnificence, and luxury that he witnessed…. With painful misgivings Luther contrasted this scene with the self-denial and hardship of his own life. His mind was becoming perplexed….

125.1 – … An **indulgence (grants full or partial forgiveness of/punishment for sin)** had been promised by the pope to all who should ascend upon their knees *"Pilate's staircase,"* said to have been descended by our Saviour on leaving the Roman judgment hall and to have been miraculously conveyed from Jerusalem to Rome.

Luther was one day devoutly climbing these steps, when suddenly a voice like thunder seemed to say to him: *"The just shall live by faith."* Romans 1:17. He sprang to his feet and hastened from the place in shame and horror. That text never lost its power upon his soul. From that time he saw more clearly than ever before the fallacy of trusting to human works for salvation, and the necessity of constant faith in the merits of Christ. His eyes had been opened, and were never again to be closed, to the delusions of the papacy. When he turned his face from Rome he had turned away also in heart.

125.2 – After his return from Rome, Luther received at the University of Wittenberg the degree of doctor of divinity…. He firmly declared that Christians should receive no other doctrines than those which rest on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. These words struck at the very foundation of papal supremacy. They contained the vital principle of the Reformation.

126.2 – Precious was the message which he bore to the eager crowds… Never before had such teachings fallen upon their ears. The glad tidings of a Saviour's love, the assurance of pardon and peace through His atoning blood, rejoiced their hearts and inspired within them an immortal hope….

127.1 – The Roman Church had made merchandise of the grace of God…. Under the plea of raising funds for the erection of St. Peter's Church at Rome, indulgences were publicly offered for sale by the authority of the pope.

128.3 – Luther, though still a papist … was filled with horror at the blasphemous assumptions of the indulgence mongers. Many of his own congregation had purchased certificates of pardon, and they soon began to come to their pastor, confessing their various sins, and expecting absolution, not because they were penitent and wished to reform, but on the ground of the indulgence. Luther refused them absolution, and warned them that unless they should repent and reform their lives, they must perish in their sins….

129.1 – Luther now entered boldly upon his work as a champion of the truth….. He set before the people the offensive character of sin, and taught them that it is impossible for man, by his own works, to lessen its guilt or evade its punishment. Nothing but repentance toward God and faith in Christ can save the sinner…. He counseled the people not to buy indulgences, but to look in faith to a crucified Redeemer….

129.2 – …. The castle church of Wittenberg possessed many relics, which on certain holy days were exhibited to the people, and full remission of sins was granted to all who then visited the church and made confession… the festival of All Saints, was approaching. On the preceding day, Luther, joining the crowds that were already making their way to the church, posted on its door a paper containing 95 propositions against the doctrine of indulgences. He declared his willingness to defend these theses next day at the university, against all who should see fit to attack them.

130.1 – … It was shown that the power to grant the pardon of sin, and to remit its penalty, had never been committed to the pope or to any other man. The whole scheme was a farce – a device of Satan to destroy the souls… It was also clearly shown that the gospel of Christ is the most valuable treasure of the church, and that the grace of God, therein revealed, is freely bestowed upon all who seek it by repentance and faith.

132.3 – When enemies appealed to custom and tradition, or to the assertions and authority of the pope, Luther met them with the Bible and the Bible only. Here were arguments which they could not answer; therefore the slaves of formalism and superstition clamored for his blood…. But Luther did not fall a prey to their fury. God had a work for him to do, and angels of heaven were sent to protect him….

133.1-3 – Luther's teachings attracted the attention of thoughtful minds throughout all Germany…. This widespread interest aroused still further the fears of the papal authorities. Luther received a summons to appear at Rome to answer to the charge of heresy….

135.1 – The tidings of Luther's arrival at Augsburg gave great satisfaction to the papal legate. The troublesome heretic who was exciting the attention of the whole world seemed now in the power of Rome, and the legate determined that he should not escape…..

Even now Luther supported the Roman Church…

140.1 – Rome became more and more exasperated by the attacks of Luther, and it was declared by some of his fanatical opponents …. that he who should kill the rebellious monk would be without sin….

141.1-2 – …. 60 days were granted the Reformer and his adherents, after which, if they did not recant, they were all to be excommunicated. That was a terrible crisis for the Reformation. For centuries Rome's sentence of excommunication had struck terror to powerful monarchs; …. Luther was not blind to the tempest about to burst upon him; but he stood firm, trusting in Christ to be his support and shield….

143.1-2 – Yet it was not without a terrible struggle that Luther decided upon a final separation from the church…. A new bull appeared, declaring the Reformer's final separation from the Roman Church, denouncing him as accursed of Heaven, and including in the same condemnation all who should receive his doctrines. The great contest had been fully entered upon.

The Diet of Worms

150.4 – The council now demanded the Reformer's appearance before them…. With the summons was issued a safe-conduct, ensuring his return to a place of security….

153.4 – The papists had not believed that Luther would really venture to appear at Worms, and his arrival filled them with consternation….

155.2 – In the presence of that powerful and titled assembly the lowly born Reformer seemed awed and embarrassed. Several of the princes, observing his emotion, approached him (and encouraged him) … Thus the words of Christ were brought by the world's great men to strengthen His servant in the hour of trial.

156.2-3 – The next day he was to appear to render his final answer. For a time his heart sank within him as he contemplated the forces that were combined against the truth. His faith faltered; fearfulness and trembling came upon him, and horror overwhelmed him….

157.1-2 – An all-wise Providence had permitted Luther to realize his peril, that he might not trust to his own strength and rush presumptuously into danger. Yet it was not the fear of personal suffering, a dread of torture or death, which seemed immediately impending, that overwhelmed him with its terror. He had come to the crisis, and he felt his insufficiency to meet it. Through his weakness the cause of truth might suffer loss. Not for his own safety, but for the triumph of the gospel did he wrestle with God…. Peace returned to his soul, and he rejoiced that he was permitted to uplift the word of God before the rulers of the nations. With his mind stayed upon God, Luther prepared for the struggle before him.

158.1 – When he was again ushered into the presence of the Diet, his countenance bore no trace of fear or embarrassment. Calm and peaceful, yet grandly brave and noble, he stood as God's witness among the great ones of the earth…. His demeanor was diffident and respectful; yet he manifested a confidence and joy that surprised the assembly.

160.3-4 – Thus stood this righteous man upon the sure foundation of the word of God. The light of heaven illuminated his countenance. His greatness and purity of character, his peace and joy of heart, were manifest to all as he testified against the power of error and witnessed to the superiority of that faith that overcomes the world. The whole assembly were for a time speechless with amazement….

161.3 – …. It was decided to give him one more opportunity to retract… Again, the question was put whether he would renounce his doctrines. *"I have no other reply to make,"* he said….

161.4 – The papal leaders were chagrined that their power, which had caused kings and nobles to tremble, should be thus despised by a humble monk…. But Luther, understanding his danger, had spoken to all with Christian dignity and calmness. His words had been free from pride, passion, and misrepresentation…. Christ had spoken through Luther's testimony with a power and grandeur that for the time inspired both friends and foes with awe and wonder…. Many were convinced of the truth; but with some the impressions received were not lasting. There was another class who did not at the time express their convictions, but who, having searched the Scriptures for themselves, at a future time became fearless supporters of the Reformation.

165.2-3 – Earnest efforts were made to obtain Luther's consent to a compromise with Rome…. Had the Reformer yielded a single point, Satan and his hosts would have gained the victory. But his unwavering firmness was the means of emancipating the church, and beginning a new and better era. The influence of this one man, who dared to think and act for himself in religious matters, was to affect the church and the world, not only in his own time, but in all future generations. His firmness and fidelity would strengthen all, to the close of time, who should pass through a similar experience. The power and majesty of God stood forth above the counsel of men, above the mighty power of Satan.

167.3 – He had not been long absent from Worms, when the papists prevailed upon the emperor to issue an edict against him…..

168.1-2 – God had provided a way of escape (and) gave wisdom to Frederick of Saxony to devise a plan for the Reformer's preservation…. Upon his homeward journey he was seized, separated from his attendants, and hurriedly conveyed through the forest to the castle of Wartburg, an isolated mountain fortress… Spring, summer, and autumn passed, and winter came, and Luther remained a prisoner. Aleander and his partisans exulted as the light of the gospel seemed about to be extinguished. But instead of this, the Reformer was filling his lamp from the storehouse of truth; and its light was to shine forth with brighter radiance.

Ulric Zwingli

171.2 – A few weeks after the birth of Luther in a miner's cabin in Saxony, Ulric Zwingli was born in a herdsman's cottage among the Alps. Zwingli's surroundings in childhood, and his early training, were such as to prepare him for his future mission. Reared amid scenes of natural grandeur, beauty, and awful sublimity, his mind was early impressed with a sense of the greatness, the power, and the majesty of God.

172.1-2 – Zwingli's father desired an education for his son, and the boy was early sent from his native valley. His mind rapidly developed, and it soon became a question where to find teachers competent to instruct him. At the age of 13 he went to Bern, which then possessed the most distinguished school in Switzerland. Here, however, a danger arose which threatened to blight the promise of his life. Determined efforts were put forth by the friars to allure him into a monastery… By deceit and flattery they endeavored to induce Zwingli to enter their convent… Providentially his father received information of the designs of the friars. He had no intention of allowing his son to follow the idle and worthless life of the monks. He saw that his future usefulness was at stake, and directed him to return home without delay.

173.1 – The command was obeyed and he soon resumed his studies, repairing, after a time, to Basel. It was here that Zwingli first heard the gospel of God's free grace….

173.2 – Zwingli was soon called from Basel to enter upon his lifework…. The more he searched the Scriptures, the clearer appeared the contrast between their truths and the heresies of Rome. He submitted himself to the Bible as the word of God, the only sufficient, infallible rule. He saw that it must be its own interpreter. He dared not attempt to explain Scripture to sustain a preconceived theory or doctrine, but held it his duty to learn what is its direct and obvious teaching…. and he invoked the aid of the Holy Spirit, which would, he declared, reveal it to all who sought it in sincerity and with prayer.

174.2 – The doctrine preached by Zwingli was not received from Luther. It was the doctrine of Christ… *"That it might be shown how much the Spirit of God is in unison with itself, since both of us, without any collusion, teach the doctrine of Christ with such uniformity."*

174.3 – In 1516 Zwingli was invited to become a preacher in the convent at Einsiedeln. Here he was to have a closer view of the corruptions of Rome and was to exert an influence as a Reformer that would be felt far beyond his native Alps. Among the chief attractions of Einsiedeln was an image of the Virgin which was said to have the power of working miracles…. at the great yearly festival of its consecration multitudes came from all parts of Switzerland, and even from France and Germany. Zwingli, greatly afflicted at the sight, seized the opportunity to proclaim liberty through the gospel to these bondslaves of superstition.

175.2-3- To many listeners these teachings were unwelcome. It was a bitter disappointment to them to be told that their toilsome journey had been made in vain. The pardon freely offered to them through Christ they could not comprehend. They were satisfied with the old way to heaven which Rome had marked out for them. They shrank from the perplexity of searching for anything better. It was easier to trust their salvation to the priests and the pope than to seek for purity of heart. But another class received with gladness the tidings of redemption through Christ….

177.1 – Already an interest had been awakened in the truths he taught; and the people flocked in great numbers to listen to his preaching…. at Einsiedeln, he presented the word of God as the only infallible authority and the death of Christ as the only complete sacrifice…. With deep interest they listened to his words. He not only proclaimed the offer of a free salvation, but fearlessly rebuked the evils and corruptions of the times…

177.2 – … At first his labors were received with great enthusiasm, after a time opposition arose. The monks set themselves to hinder his work and condemn his teachings…. But Zwingli bore all with patience, saying: *"If we desire to gain over the wicked to Jesus Christ, we must shut our eyes against many things."*

178.2-3 – …. As men were rising up in different lands to present to the people forgiveness and justification through the blood of Christ, Rome proceeded with renewed energy to open her market throughout Christendom, offering pardon for money. Every sin had its price … Thus, the two movements advanced – one offering forgiveness of sin for money, the other forgiveness through Christ…

179.2 – A strong impetus was given to the reform by the appearance of the plague, or Great Death, which swept over Switzerland in the year 1519…. Zwingli was smitten down; he was brought so low that all hope of his recovery was relinquished, and the report was widely circulated that he was dead. In that trying hour his hope and courage were unshaken. He looked in faith to the cross of Calvary, trusting in the all-sufficient propitiation for sin. When he came back from the gates of death, it was to preach the gospel with greater fervor than ever before; and his words exerted an unwonted power….

180.2-3 – Such was the interest in Zwingli's preaching that the cathedral was filled to overflowing with the crowds that came to listen to him. Little by little, as they could bear it, he opened the truth to his hearers…. His work was to win their hearts to the teachings of Christ, to soften them by His love, and keep before them His example; and as they should receive the principles of the gospel, their superstitious beliefs and practices would inevitably be overthrown…. Step by step the Reformation advanced in Zurich. In alarm its enemies aroused to active opposition….

181.2 – … The Reformer, when apprised of the plots of his enemies, exclaimed: "*Let them come on; I fear them as the beetling cliff fears the waves that thunder at its feet.*" … The truth continued to spread.

181.4 – The victories gained by the Reformation stirred the Romanists to still more determined efforts for its overthrow. Seeing how little had been accomplished by persecution in suppressing Luther's work in Germany, they decided to meet the reform with its own weapons… if they could once get Zwingli into their power, they would take care that he did not escape them…. This purpose, however, was carefully concealed.

182.1-183.1 – The disputation was appointed to be held at Baden; but Zwingli was not present…. (Though) his influence was felt. The secretaries were all chosen by the papists, and others were forbidden to take notes, on pain of death. Notwithstanding this, Zwingli received daily a faithful account of what was said at Baden… The Reformer answered, giving counsel and suggestions…. Thus Zwingli maintained the battle with his wily antagonists.

184.2 – The discussion continued 18 days. At its close the papists with great confidence claimed the victory. Most of the deputies sided with Rome, and the Diet pronounced the Reformers vanquished and declared that they, together with Zwingli, their leader, were cut off from the church… The contest resulted in a strong impetus to the Protestant cause, and it was not long afterward that the important cities of Bern and Basel declared for the Reformation.

Lesson 8

Progress of Reform in Germany

(see Chapter 10)

1. Read Matthew 24:11-12, 24; Ephesians 5:6-11; Colossians 2:6-8; 1 Thess 5:19-21; 1 John 4:1 and the following GC paragraphs:

185. – The Reformation was constantly gaining in strength. The seed which Luther had sown sprang up everywhere. His absence accomplished a work which his presence would have failed to do.

186.1 – But Satan was not idle. He now attempted what he has attempted in every other reformatory movement – to deceive and destroy the people by palming off upon them a counterfeit in place of the true work. As there were false christs in the 1st century of the Christian church, so there arose false prophets in the 16th century.

186.2 – A few men, deeply affected by the excitement in the religious world, imagined themselves to have received special revelations from Heaven, and claimed to have been divinely commissioned to carry forward to its completion the Reformation which, they declared, had been but feebly begun by Luther. In truth, they were undoing the very work which he had accomplished. They rejected the great principle which was the very foundation of the Reformation – that the word of God is the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice; and for that unerring guide they substituted the changeable, uncertain standard of their own feelings and impressions. By this act of setting aside the great detector of error and falsehood the way was opened for Satan to control minds as best pleased himself.

187.1-2 – The leaders of the movement proceeded to Wittenberg and urged their claims upon Melanchthon and his colaborers. Said they: *"We are sent by God to instruct the people. We have held familiar conversations with the Lord; we know what will happen; in a word, we are apostles and prophets, and appeal to Dr. Luther."* The Reformers were astonished and perplexed. Said Melanchthon: *"There are indeed extraordinary spirits in these men; but what spirits? . . . On the one hand, let us beware of quenching the Spirit of God, and on the other, of being led astray by the spirit of Satan."*

187.3 – The fruit of the new teaching soon became apparent. The people were led to neglect the Bible or to cast it wholly aside… The men who thought themselves competent to revive and control the work of the Reformation succeeded only in bringing it to the verge of ruin….

A pattern has developed. When persecution does not work, Satan has a back-up plan – he infiltrates the church itself – often with great success. With this knowledge, how can we protect ourselves?

2. Read Zechariah 4:6; Matthew 10:14 and the following GC paragraphs:

187.4 – Luther … perceived the true character of those pretended prophets and saw the danger that threatened the cause of truth. The opposition of the pope and the emperor had not caused him so great perplexity and distress as he now experienced… The very truths which had brought him so great joy and consolation were being employed to stir up strife and create confusion in the church.

189.3-190.1 – It was soon noised through Wittenberg that Luther had returned and that he was to preach. The people flocked from all directions, and the church was filled to overflowing. Ascending the pulpit, he with great wisdom and gentleness instructed, exhorted, and reproved…. he said: *"The mass is a bad thing; God is opposed to it; it ought to be abolished; and I would that throughout the whole world it were replaced by the supper of the gospel. But let no one be torn from it by force. We must leave the matter in God's hands. His word must act, and not we. And why so? you will ask. Because I do not hold men's hearts in my hand, as the potter holds the clay. We have a right to speak: we have not the right to act. Let us preach; the rest belongs unto God. Were I to employ force, what should I gain? Grimace, formality, apings, human ordinances, and hypocrisy…. But there would be no sincerity of heart, nor faith, nor charity. Where these three are wanting, all is wanting, and I would not give a pear stalk for such a result…. God does more by His word alone than you and I and all the world by our united strength. God lays hold upon the heart; and when the heart is taken, all is won…. I will preach, discuss, and write; but I will constrain none, for faith is a voluntary act."*

Discuss how Christians should value and champion Freedom of Choice.

3. Read 2 Peter 2:1-3 and the following GC paragraphs:

190.4-191.1 – The fanaticism was checked for a time; but several years later it broke out with greater violence and more terrible results….. Thomas Munzer, the most active of the fanatics, was a man of considerable ability, which, rightly directed, would have enabled him to do good; but he had not learned the first principles of true religion. *"He was possessed with a desire of reforming the world, and forgot, as all enthusiasts do, that the reformation should begin with himself."* He was ambitious to obtain position and influence, and was unwilling to be second, even to Luther. He declared that the Reformers, in substituting the authority of Scripture for that of the pope, were only establishing a different form of popery. He himself, he claimed, had been divinely commissioned to introduce the true reform. *"He who possesses this spirit,"* said Munzer, *"possesses the true faith, although he should never see the Scriptures in his life."*

191.2-3 – The fanatical teachers gave themselves up to be governed by impressions, regarding every thought and impulse as the voice of God; consequently, they went to great extremes. Some even burned their Bibles, exclaiming: *"The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."* Munzer's teaching appealed to men's desire for the marvelous, while it gratified their pride by virtually placing human ideas and opinions above the word of God…

192.3 – Satan is constantly seeking to deceive men and lead them to call sin righteousness, and righteousness sin. How successful has been his work! How often censure and reproach are cast upon God's faithful servants because they will stand fearlessly in defense of the truth! Men who are but agents of Satan are praised and

flattered, and even looked upon as martyrs, while those who should be respected and sustained for their fidelity to God, are left to stand alone, under suspicion and distrust.

193.1 – Counterfeit holiness, spurious sanctification, is still doing its work of deception. Under various forms it exhibits the same spirit as in the days of Luther, diverting minds from the Scriptures and leading men to follow their own feelings and impressions rather than to yield obedience to the law of God. This is one of Satan's most successful devices to cast reproach upon purity and truth.

Why is fanaticism so dangerous? How do we guard against it?

4. Read 1 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 1:22-23 and the following GC paragraphs:

193.4 – Upon his return from the Wartburg, Luther completed his translation of the New Testament, and the gospel was soon after given to the people of Germany in their own language….

194.3 – These writings were studied with deep interest by rich and poor, the learned and the ignorant. At night the teachers of the village schools read them aloud to little groups gathered at the fireside. With every effort some souls would be convicted of the truth and, receiving the word with gladness, would in their turn tell the good news to others.

196.1 – As the Romish clergy saw their congregations diminishing, they invoked the aid of the magistrates, and by every means in their power endeavored to bring back their hearers. But the people had found in the new teachings that which supplied the wants of their souls, and they turned away from those who had so long fed them with the worthless husks of superstitious rites and human traditions.

196.2 – …. The light penetrated everywhere. The fugitives would find somewhere a hospitable door opened to them, and there abiding, they would preach Christ, sometimes in the church, or, if denied that privilege, in private houses or in the open air… The truth, proclaimed with such energy and assurance, spread with irresistible power.

196.3 – In vain both ecclesiastical and civil authorities were invoked to crush the heresy. In vain they resorted to imprisonment, torture, fire, and sword. Thousands of believers sealed their faith with their blood, and yet the work went on. Persecution served only to extend the truth, and the fanaticism which Satan endeavored to unite with it resulted in making more clear the contrast between the work of Satan and the work of God.

What does the truth, as found in the Bible have the power to do?

Lesson 9

Protest of the Princes

(see Chapter 11)

During an interlude of comparative peace and religious liberty, the Reform Movement in Germany had strengthened and become unified. But this was not to last. At the Diet of Spires in 1526, each German State was granted full liberty in matters of religion, however in 1529 another Diet of Spires was convened by the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V for the express purpose of crushing heresy….

The courage, faith, and firmness of those men of God gained for succeeding ages liberty of thought and of conscience. Their Protest gave to the reformed church the name of Protestant…

Read the following GC paragraphs and discuss the importance of religious liberty for all people and the lessons we can learn and apply to our time:

198.1 – The papists were exultant. They appeared at Spires in great numbers, and openly manifested their hostility toward the Reformers and all who favored them…… The evangelical princes … were forbidden even to have the gospel preached in their dwellings. But the people of Spires thirsted for the word of God, and, notwithstanding the prohibition, thousands flocked to the services held in the chapel of the elector of Saxony.

198.2 – This hastened the crisis. An imperial message announced to the Diet that as the resolution granting liberty of conscience had given rise to great disorders, the emperor required that it be annulled….

199.1 – The priests demanded that the states which had accepted the Reformation submit implicitly to Romish jurisdiction. The Reformers, on the other hand, claimed the liberty which had previously been granted...

199.3 – As a compromise it was finally proposed that where the Reformation had not become established, the Edict of Worms should be rigorously enforced; …. If this edict were enforced, *"the Reformation could neither be extended . . . where as yet it was unknown, nor be established on solid foundations . . . where it already existed."*

199.4-200.1 – The acceptance of the proposed arrangement would have been a virtual admission that religious liberty ought to be confined to reformed Saxony; and as to all the rest of Christendom, free inquiry and the profession of the reformed faith were crimes, and must be visited with the dungeon and the stake. Could they consent to localize religious liberty? …. This would have been to betray, at that supreme hour, the cause of the gospel and the liberties of Christendom. Rather would they *"sacrifice everything, even their states, their crowns, and their lives."*

201.1 – *"Let us reject this decree,"* said the princes. *"In matters of conscience the majority has no power."* …. To protect liberty of conscience is the duty of the state, and this is the limit of its authority in matters of religion. Every secular government that attempts to regulate or enforce religious observances by civil authority is sacrificing the very principle for which the evangelical Christian so nobly struggled.

203.4 – … Now this Protest opposes two abuses of man in matters of faith: 1. The intrusion of the civil magistrate, and 2. The arbitrary authority of the church. Instead of these abuses, Protestantism sets the power of conscience above the magistrate, and the authority of the word of God above the visible church… The protesters had moreover affirmed their right to utter freely their convictions of truth. They would not only believe and obey, but teach what the word of God presents, and they denied the right of priest or magistrate to interfere. The Protest of Spires was a solemn witness against religious intolerance, and an assertion of the right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

204.2 – … The experience of these noble Reformers contains a lesson for all succeeding ages. Satan's manner of working against God and His word has not changed; he is still as much opposed to the Scriptures being made the guide of life as in the 16th century. In our time there is a wide departure from their doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle – the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty. Satan is still working through every means which he can control to destroy religious liberty. The antichristian power which the protesters of Spires rejected is now with renewed vigor seeking to re-establish its lost supremacy. The same unswerving adherence to the word of God manifested at that crisis of the Reformation is the only hope of reform today.

Lesson 10

Reformation & Revolution in France

(see Chapters 12 & 15)

Reformation

1. Read Romans 1:17; Philippians 3:1-9 and the following GC paragraphs:

212.1 – …. In France, before the name of Luther had been heard as a Reformer, the day had already begun to break. One of the first to catch the light was the aged Lefevre, a man of extensive learning, a professor in the University of Paris – a sincere and zealous papist…

212.2 – Lefevre was an enthusiastic adorer of the saints, and he had undertaken to prepare a history of the saints and martyrs as given in the legends of the church…. thinking that he might obtain useful assistance from the Bible, he began its study with this object. Here indeed he found saints brought to view, but not such as figured in the Roman calendar. A flood of divine light broke in upon his mind. In amazement and disgust he turned away from his self-appointed task and devoted himself to the word of God. The precious truths which he there discovered he soon began to teach.

212.3-213.1 – In 1512, Lefevre wrote: *"It is God who gives us, by faith, that righteousness which by grace alone justifies to eternal life."* Dwelling upon the mysteries of redemption, he exclaimed: *"Oh, the unspeakable greatness of that exchange – the Sinless One is condemned, and he who is guilty goes free; the Blessing bears the curse, and the cursed is brought into blessing; the Life dies, and the dead live; the Glory is whelmed in darkness, and he who knew nothing but confusion of face is clothed with glory."* And while teaching that the glory of salvation belongs solely to God, he also declared that the duty of obedience belongs to man….

213.2 – There were some among Lefevre's students who listened eagerly to his words, and who, long after the teacher's voice should be silenced, were to continue to declare the truth. Such was William Farel. The son of pious parents, and educated to accept with implicit faith the teachings of the church… A devoted Romanist, he burned with zeal to destroy all who should dare to oppose the church. *"I would gnash my teeth like a furious wolf when I heard anyone speaking against the pope."* He had been untiring in his adoration of the saints… But these observances could not bring peace of soul. Conviction of sin fastened upon him, which all the acts of penance that he practiced failed to banish. As to a voice from heaven he listened to the Reformer's words: *"Salvation is of grace. The Innocent One is condemned, and the criminal is acquitted. It is the cross of Christ alone that openeth the gates of heaven, and shutteth the gates of hell."*

214.1 – Farel joyfully accepted the truth. By a conversion like that of Paul he turned from the bondage of tradition to the liberty of the sons of God. *"Instead of the murderous heart of a ravening wolf,"* he came back, he says, *"quietly like a meek and harmless lamb, having his heart entirely withdrawn from the pope, and given to Jesus Christ."*

Discuss the transformational power of the truth that is found in Righteousness by Faith.

2. Read the following GC paragraphs and briefly discuss what happens when people read the Bible:

214.2 – …A dignitary of the church, the bishop of Meaux, soon after united with them. Other teachers who ranked high for their ability and learning joined in proclaiming the gospel, and it won adherents among all classes, from the homes of artisans and peasants to the palace of the king… and with high hopes the Reformers looked forward to the time when France should be won to the gospel.

214.3 – But their hopes were not to be realized. Trial and persecution awaited the disciples of Christ. This, however, was mercifully veiled from their eyes. A time of peace intervened, that they might gain strength to meet the tempest; and the Reformation made rapid progress…. Lefevre undertook the translation of the New Testament; and at the very time when Luther's German Bible was issuing from the press in Wittenberg, the French New Testament was published at Meaux. The bishop spared no labor or expense to circulate it in his parishes, and soon the peasants of Meaux were in possession of the Holy Scriptures.

215.1 – … The laborers in the field, the artisans in the workshop, cheered their daily toil by talking of the precious truths of the Bible. At evening, instead of resorting to the wine-shops, they assembled in one another's homes to read God's word and join in prayer and praise. A great change was soon manifest in these communities. Though belonging to the humblest class, an unlearned and hard-working peasantry, the reforming, uplifting power of divine grace was seen in their lives. Humble, loving, and holy, they stood as witnesses to what the gospel will accomplish for those who receive it in sincerity.

3. Read Acts 6:8-15; 7:54-60 and the following GC paragraphs and discuss the witness of Louis de Berquin:

215.2 – …. The rage of the hierarchy was for a time held in check by the king, who despised the narrow bigotry of the monks; but the papal leaders finally prevailed. Now the stake was set up…. Many witnessed for the truth amid the flames. By their courage and fidelity at the stake, these humble Christians spoke to thousands who in days of peace had never heard their testimony.

215.3 – …. In the lordly halls of the castle and the palace there were kingly souls by whom truth was valued above wealth or rank or even life... Louis de Berquin was of noble birth. A brave and courtly knight, he was devoted to study, polished in manners, and of blameless morals. *"He was a great follower of the papistical constitutions, and a great hearer of masses and sermons… and he crowned all his other virtues by holding Lutheranism in special abhorrence."* Like so many others, providentially guided to the Bible, he was amazed to find there*, "not the doctrines of Rome, but the doctrines of Luther."*--- he gave his entire devotion to the cause of the gospel.

216.1-2 – *"The most learned of the nobles of France,"* his genius and eloquence, his indomitable courage and heroic zeal, and his influence at court – caused him to be regarded by many as one destined to be the Reformer of his country…. (He) was repeatedly warned of the danger that threatened him in France, and urged to follow the steps of those who had found safety in voluntary exile…. But as dangers thickened, Berquin's zeal only waxed the stronger…. He would not only stand in defense of the truth, but he would attack error….

216.3 – The most active and bitter of his opponents were the learned doctors and monks of the theological department in the great University of Paris, one of the highest ecclesiastical authorities both in the city and the nation. From the writings of these doctors, Berquin drew twelve propositions which he publicly declared to be *"opposed to the Bible, and heretical;"* and he appealed to the king to act as judge in the controversy.

217.1 – The monarch.... glad of an opportunity of humbling the pride of these haughty monks, bade the Romanists defend their cause by the Bible. This weapon, they well knew, would avail them little; imprisonment, torture, and the stake were arms which they better understood how to wield. Now the tables were turned, and they saw themselves about to fall into the pit into which they had hoped to plunge Berquin. In amazement they looked about them for some way of escape.

217.2 – *"Just at that time an image of the Virgin at the corner of one of the streets, was mutilated."* There was great excitement in the city. Crowds of people flocked to the place, with expressions of mourning and indignation. The king also was deeply moved. Here was an advantage which the monks could turn to good account, and they were quick to improve it. *"These are the fruits of the doctrines of Berquin,"* they cried. *"All is about to be overthrown – religion, the laws, the throne itself – by this Lutheran conspiracy."*

217.3 – Again Berquin was apprehended – He was tried and condemned to die (unless Francis intervened) … At noon Berquin was conducted to the place of death. An immense throng gathered to witness the event.... Amazement, indignation, scorn, and bitter hatred darkened the faces of that surging crowd; but upon one face no shadow rested. The martyr's thoughts were far from that scene of tumult; he was conscious only of the presence of his Lord.

218.1 – The wretched tumbrel upon which he rode, the frowning faces of his persecutors, the dreadful death to which he was going – these he heeded not; He who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of death and of hell, was beside him. Berquin's countenance was radiant with the light and peace of heaven....

218.2 – As the procession moved slowly through the crowded streets, the people marked with wonder the unclouded peace, and joyous triumph, of his look and bearing. *"He is,"* they said, *"like one who sits in a temple, and meditates on holy things."*

218.4 – Berquin was strangled, and his body was consumed in the flames. The tidings of his death caused sorrow to the friends of the Reformation throughout France. But his example was not lost. *"We, too, are ready,"* said the witnesses for the truth, *"to meet death cheerfully, setting our eyes on the life that is to come."*

4. Discuss the contribution of John Calvin to the Reformation:

219.3 – .... In one of the schools of Paris was a thoughtful, quiet youth, already giving evidence of a powerful and penetrating mind, and no less marked for the blamelessness of his life than for intellectual ardor and religious devotion. His genius and application soon made him the pride of the college, and it was confidently anticipated that John Calvin would become one of the ablest and most honored defenders of the church. But a ray of divine light penetrated even within the walls of scholasticism and superstition by which Calvin was enclosed. He heard of the new doctrines with a shudder, nothing doubting that the heretics deserved the fire to which they were given. Yet all unwittingly he was brought face to face with the heresy and forced to test the power of Romish theology to combat the Protestant teaching.

220.1 – A cousin of Calvin's, who had joined the Reformers, was in Paris. The two kinsmen often met and discussed together the matters that were disturbing Christendom. *"There are but two religions in the world,"* said Olivetan, the Protestant. *"The one class of religions are those which men have invented, in all of which man saves himself by ceremonies and good works; the other is that one religion which is revealed in the Bible, and which teaches man to look for salvation solely from the free grace of God."*

220.2-3 – *"I will have none of your new doctrines,"* exclaimed Calvin; *"think you that I have lived in error all my days?"* But thoughts had been awakened in his mind which he could not banish at will. Alone in his chamber he pondered upon his cousin's words. Conviction of sin fastened upon him; he saw himself, without an intercessor, in the presence of a holy and just Judge. The mediation of saints, good works, the ceremonies of the church, all were powerless to atone for sin. He could see before him nothing but the blackness of eternal despair. In vain the doctors of the church endeavored to relieve his woe. Confession, penance, were resorted to in vain; they could not reconcile the soul with God.

220.4 – While still engaged in these fruitless struggles, Calvin, chancing one day to visit one of the public squares, witnessed there the burning of a heretic. He was filled with wonder at the expression of peace which rested upon the martyr's countenance. Amid the tortures of that dreadful death, and under the more terrible condemnation of the church, he manifested a faith and courage which the young student painfully contrasted with his own despair and darkness, while living in strictest obedience to the church. Upon the Bible, he knew, the heretics rested their faith. He determined to study it, and discover, if he could, the secret of their joy.

221.1 – In the Bible he found Christ. …. *"We had devised for ourselves many useless follies, but Thou hast placed Thy word before me like a torch, and Thou hast touched my heart, in order that I may hold in abomination all other merits save those of Jesus."*

221.3-4 – .... Now, feeling that he could never become a priest, he turned for a time to the study of law, but finally abandoned this purpose and determined to devote his life to the gospel. But he hesitated to become a public teacher. He was naturally timid, and was burdened with a sense of the weighty responsibility of the position, and he desired still to devote himself to study…. His work began with the people at their homes…. To both the castle and the cabin he found entrance, and he went forward, laying the foundation of churches that were to yield fearless witnesses for the truth.

222.1 – A few months and he was again in Paris…. While the halls of the universities were filled with the clamor of theological disputation, Calvin was making his way from house to house, opening the Bible to the people, and speaking to them of Christ and Him crucified.

223.2 – …. At last, however, suspicion fastened upon him. The authorities determined to bring him to the flames. Regarding himself as secure in his seclusion, he had no thought of danger, when friends came hurrying to his room with the news that officers were on their way to arrest him. At that instant a loud knocking was heard at the outer entrance. There was not a moment to be lost. Some of his friends detained the officers at the door, while others assisted the Reformer to let himself down from a window, and he rapidly made his way to the outskirts of the city. Finding shelter in the cottage of a laborer who was a friend to the reform, he disguised himself in the garments of his host, and, shouldering a hoe, started on his journey. Traveling southward, he again found refuge in the dominions of Margaret.

224.1 – Here for a few months he remained, safe under the protection of powerful friends …. But his heart was set upon the evangelization of France, and he could not long remain inactive. As soon as the storm had somewhat abated, he sought a new field of labor in Poitiers… Persons of all classes gladly listened to the gospel. There was no public preaching, but in the home of the chief magistrate, in his own lodgings, and sometimes in a public garden, Calvin opened the words of eternal life to those who desired to listen.

224.2 – Once more Calvin returned to Paris. He could not even yet relinquish the hope that France as a nation would accept the Reformation. But he found almost every door of labor closed. To teach the gospel was to take the direct road to the stake, and he at last determined to depart to Germany….

233.1 – The city (Geneva) had already declared for the Reformation when Calvin, after various wanderings and vicissitudes, entered its gates….

236.1 – For nearly thirty years Calvin labored at Geneva, first to establish there a church adhering to the morality of the Bible, and then for the advancement of the Reformation throughout Europe…..

5. Read Matthew 23:37-38 and the following GC paragraphs. Discuss the legacy of the Reformation in France.

222.2 – In God's providence, Paris was to receive another invitation to accept the gospel. The call of Lefevre and Farel had been rejected, but again the message was to be heard by all classes in that great capital….. Thousands every day assembled – nobles, statesmen, lawyers, merchants, and artisans. The king, instead of forbidding the assemblies, ordered that two of the churches of Paris should be opened. Never before had the city been so moved by the word of God….. Temperance, purity, order, and industry were taking the place of drunkenness, licentiousness, strife, and idleness.

223.1 – But the hierarchy were not idle…. No means were spared to excite the fears, the prejudices, and the fanaticism of the ignorant and superstitious multitude. Yielding blindly to her false teachers, Paris, like Jerusalem of old, knew not the time of her visitation nor the things which belonged unto her peace. For two years the word of God was preached in the capital; but, while there were many who accepted the gospel, the majority of the people rejected it…. Again the churches were closed, and the stake was set up.

224.3 – The French Reformers, eager to see their country keeping pace with Germany and Switzerland, determined to strike a bold blow against the superstitions of Rome, that should arouse the whole nation. Accordingly placards attacking the mass were in one night posted all over France. Instead of advancing the reform, this zealous but ill-judged movement brought ruin, not only upon its propagators, but upon the friends of the reformed faith throughout France. It gave the Romanists what they had long desired – a pretext for demanding the utter destruction of the heretics as agitators dangerous to the stability of the throne and the peace of the nation.

225.2 – Measures were at once taken for the arrest of every Lutheran in Paris. A poor artisan, an adherent of the reformed faith, who had been accustomed to summon the believers to their secret assemblies, was seized and, with the threat of instant death at the stake, was commanded to conduct the papal emissary to the home of every Protestant in the city. He shrank in horror from the base proposal, but at last fear of the flames prevailed, and he consented to become the betrayer of his brethren…. On arriving opposite the house of a Lutheran, the betrayer made a sign, but no word was uttered. The procession halted, the house was entered, the family were dragged forth and chained, and the terrible company went forward in search of fresh victims. They *"spared no house, great or small, not even the colleges of the University of Paris. . . It was a reign of terror."*

226.1 – The victims were put to death with cruel torture, it being specially ordered that the fire should be lowered in order to prolong their agony. But they died as conquerors…. *"The scaffolds were distributed over all*

the quarters of Paris, and the burnings followed on successive days, the design being to spread the terror of heresy by spreading the executions. The advantage, however, in the end, remained with the gospel. All Paris was enabled to see what kind of men the new opinions could produce…. The serene joy that lighted up the faces of these men as they passed along . . . pleaded with resistless eloquence in behalf of the gospel."

226.2 – …. The cruelties that were inflicted upon the innocent Protestants by the Catholics accumulated in a weight of retribution, and in after centuries wrought the very doom they had predicted to be impending, upon the king, his government, and his subjects; but it was brought about by infidels and by the papists themselves. It was not the establishment, but the suppression, of Protestantism, that, 300 years later, was to bring upon France these dire calamities.

227.3-228.3 – France by a solemn and public ceremony was to commit herself fully to the destruction of Protestantism… The 21st of January, 1535, was fixed upon for the awful ceremonial…. Before daybreak the procession formed at the palace of the king… Tears choked his utterance, and the whole assembly wept, with one accord exclaiming: *"We will live and die for the Catholic religion!"*

229.1 – Terrible had become the darkness of the nation that had rejected the light of truth…. France, after beholding its power and holiness, after thousands had been drawn by its divine beauty, after cities and hamlets had been illuminated by its radiance, had turned away, choosing darkness rather than light. They had put from them the heavenly gift when it was offered them. They had called evil good, and good evil, till they had fallen victims to their willful self-deception. Now, though they might actually believe that they were doing God service in persecuting His people, yet their sincerity did not render them guiltless. The light that would have saved them from deception, from staining their souls with bloodguiltiness, they had willfully rejected.

230.2 – The gospel of peace which France had rejected was to be only too surely rooted out, and terrible would be the results. On the 21st of January, 1793, 258 years from the very day that fully committed France to the persecution of the Reformers, another procession, with a far different purpose, passed through the streets of Paris. *"Again the king was the chief figure; again there were tumult and shouting; again there was heard the cry for more victims; again there were black scaffolds; and again the scenes of the day were closed by horrid executions; Louis XVI, struggling hand to hand with his jailers and executioners, was dragged forward to the block, and there held down by main force till the ax had fallen, and his dissevered head rolled on the scaffold."* Nor was the king the only victim; near the same spot 2800 human beings perished by the guillotine during the bloody days of the Reign of Terror.

The Counter-Reformation was the Institutional Churches response to the Protestant Reformation. Here are some of the outcomes of the Counter-Reformation:

- *In 1534 St, Ignatius of Loyola founded the Jesuits. They were officially established by the papacy in 1540. The Jesuits swore special obedience to the pope and were dedicated to the task of reconstructing church life and teaching in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation. They thus came to be called the "shock troops of the Counter-Reformation."*
- *In 1542 the Roman Inquisition was established to combat Protestantism.*
- *In 1545 Pope Paul III convened the Council of Trent – what emerged is the Catholic church we know today.*

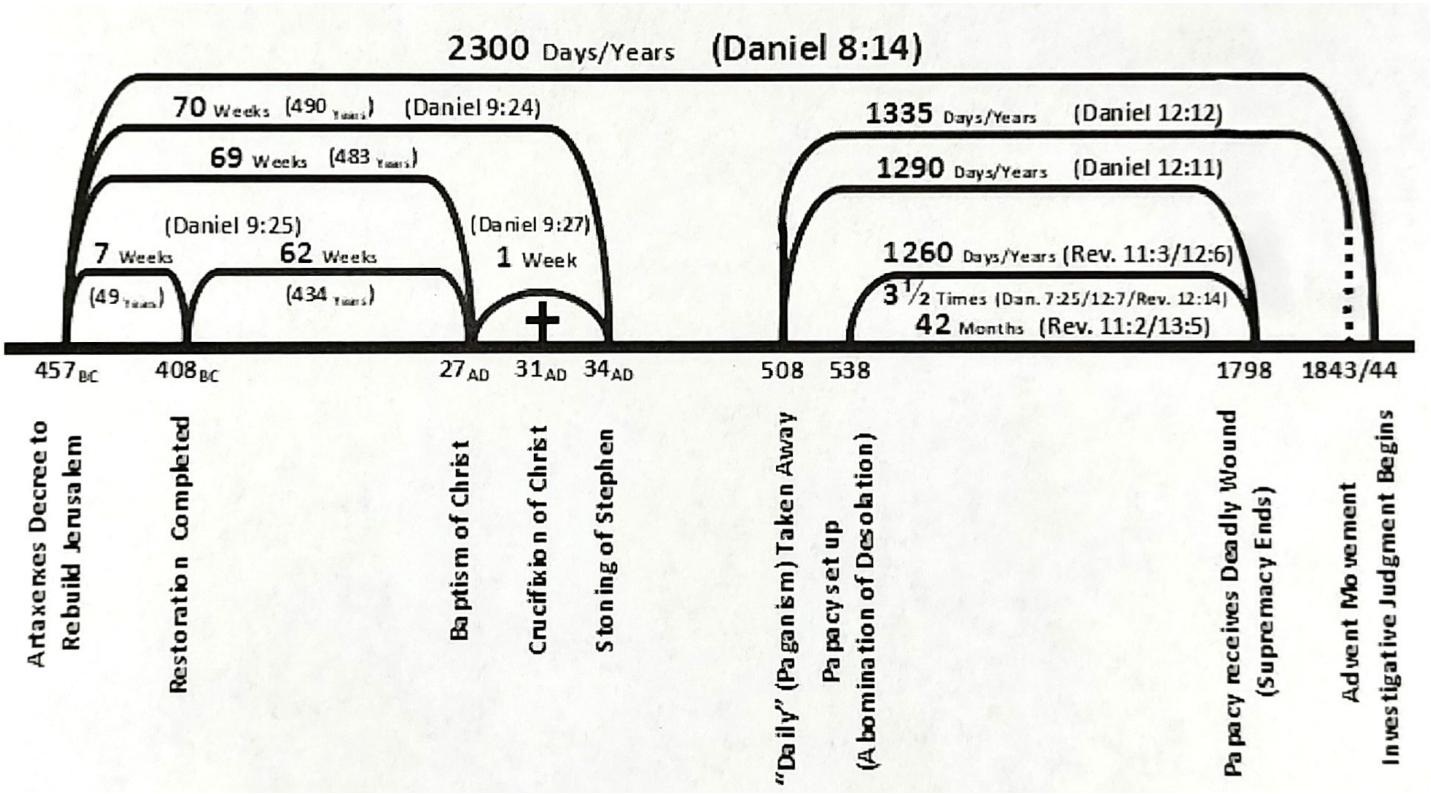
- *Outside of the Council, various theologians—especially the Jesuit, St. Robet Bellarmine – attacked the doctrinal positions of the Protestant reformers, but there was no one to rival the theological and moral engagement evident in the writings of Martin Luther or the eloquence and passion characteristic of the works of John Calvin.*
- *In 1559 the "Index of forbidden Books" was established to combat the spread of some of the writings of the Reformation. Many books deemed heretical were destroyed.*

Revolution

In the 16th century the Reformation, presenting an open Bible to the people, had sought admission to all the countries of Europe…. In one country, though the light found entrance, it was not comprehended by the darkness. For centuries, truth and error struggled for the mastery. At last the evil triumphed, and the truth of Heaven was thrust out…. The nation was left to reap the results of the course which she had chosen. The restraint of God's Spirit was removed from a people that had despised the gift of His grace. Evil was permitted to come to maturity. And all the world saw the fruit of willful rejection of the light.

The war against the Bible, carried forward for so many centuries in France, culminated in the scenes of the Revolution. That terrible outbreaking was but the legitimate result of Rome's suppression of the Scriptures. It presented the most striking illustration which the world has ever witnessed of the working out of the papal policy….

6. Read Daniel 7:24-25; Matthew 24:22; Revelation 11:2-11 and following GC paragraphs:



266.3 – The periods here mentioned – *"42 months," and "1,260 days"* – are the same, alike representing the time in which the church of Christ was to suffer oppression from Rome. The 1260 years of papal supremacy began in A.D. 538, and would therefore terminate in 1798. At that time a French army entered Rome and made the pope a prisoner, and he died in exile. Though a new pope was soon afterward elected, the papal hierarchy has never since been able to wield the power which it before possessed.

266.4 – The persecution of the church did not continue throughout the entire period of the 1260 years. God in mercy to His people cut short the time of their fiery trial…. Through the influence of the Reformation the persecution was brought to an end prior to 1798.

267.1 – The two witnesses represent the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Both are important testimonies to the origin and perpetuity of the law of God. Both are witnesses also to the plan of salvation. The types, sacrifices, and prophecies of the Old Testament point forward to a Saviour to come. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament tell of a Saviour who has come in the exact manner foretold by type and prophecy.

267.2 – … During the greater part of this period, God's witnesses remained in a state of obscurity. The papal power sought to hide from the people the word of truth, and set before them false witnesses to contradict its testimony. When the Bible was proscribed by religious and secular authority; when its testimony was perverted, and every effort made that men and demons could invent to turn the minds of the people from it; when those who dared proclaim its sacred truths were hunted, betrayed, tortured, buried in dungeon cells, martyred for their faith, or compelled to flee to mountain fastnesses, and to dens and caves of the earth – then the faithful witnesses prophesied in sackcloth. Yet they continued their testimony throughout the entire period of 1260 years. In the darkest times there were faithful men who loved God's word and were jealous for His honor. To these loyal servants were given wisdom, power, and authority to declare His truth during the whole of this time.

269.1 – It had been Rome's policy, under a profession of reverence for the Bible, to keep it locked up in an unknown tongue and hidden away from the people. Under her rule the witnesses prophesied *"clothed in sackcloth."* But another power – the beast from the bottomless pit – was to arise to make open, avowed war upon the word of God.

Discuss how Bible Prophecy found its fulfillment in the efforts of the institutional church to suppress the Word of God:

7. Read Psalm 118:8; 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Revelation 22:18-19 and the following GC paragraph:

268.1-2 – … Men cannot with impunity trample upon the word of God…. Such are the warnings which God has given to guard men against changing in any manner that which He has revealed or commanded. These solemn denunciations apply to all who by their influence lead men to regard lightly the law of God. They should cause those to fear and tremble who flippantly declare it a matter of little consequence whether we obey God's law or not. All who exalt their own opinions above divine revelation, all who would change the plain meaning of Scripture to suit their own convenience, or for the sake of conforming to the world, are taking upon themselves a fearful responsibility. The written word, the law of God, will measure the character of every man and condemn all whom this unerring test shall declare wanting.

Why is it so important for us to guard against even the merest suggestion that the Bible can be manipulated or changed?

8. Read Genesis 6:5; 13:13; Exodus 5:2; Psalm 14:1; Jude 1:7; Revelation 11:7-8 and the following GC paragraphs:

269.2 – *"The great city"* in whose streets the witnesses are slain, and where their dead bodies lie, is *"spiritually"* Egypt. Of all nations presented in Bible history, Egypt most boldly denied the existence of the living God and resisted His commands. No monarch ever ventured upon more open and highhanded rebellion against the authority of Heaven than did the king of Egypt…. This is atheism, and the nation represented by Egypt would give voice to a similar denial of the claims of the living God and would manifest a like spirit of unbelief and defiance. *"The great city"* is also compared, *"spiritually,"* to Sodom. The corruption of Sodom in breaking the law of God was especially manifested in licentiousness. And this sin was also to be a pre-eminent characteristic of the nation that should fulfill the specifications of this scripture.

269.3 – According to the words of the prophet, then, a little before the year 1798 some power of satanic origin and character would rise to make war upon the Bible. And in the land where the testimony of God's 2 witnesses should thus be silenced, there would be manifest the atheism of the Pharaoh and the licentiousness of Sodom.

269.4 – This prophecy has received a most exact and striking fulfillment in the history of France. During the Revolution, in 1793, *"the world for the first time heard an assembly of men, born and educated in civilization, and assuming the right to govern one of the finest of the European nations, uplift their united voice to deny the most solemn truth which man's soul receives, and renounce unanimously the belief and worship of a Deity."* …

"France is the only nation in the world concerning which the authentic record survives, that as a nation she lifted her hand in open rebellion against the Author of the universe. Plenty of blasphemers, plenty of infidels, there have been, and still continue to be, in England, Germany, Spain, and elsewhere; but France stands apart in the world's history as the single state which, by the decree of her Legislative Assembly, pronounced that there was no God, and of which the entire population of the capital, and a vast majority elsewhere, women as well as men, danced and sang with joy in accepting the announcement."

271.1 – … In no land had the spirit of enmity against Christ been more strikingly displayed. In no country had the truth encountered more bitter and cruel opposition. In the persecution which France had visited upon the confessors of the gospel, she had crucified Christ in the person of His disciples.

271.2, 272.1-2 – Century after century the blood of the saints had been shed…. But blackest in the black catalogue of crime, most horrible among the fiendish deeds of all the dreadful centuries, was the St. Bartholomew Massacre (1572). The world still recalls with shuddering horror the scenes of that most cowardly and cruel onslaught…. A bell, tolling at dead of night, was a signal for the slaughter. Protestants by thousands, sleeping quietly in their homes, trusting to the plighted honor of their king, were dragged forth without a warning and murdered in cold blood…. For seven days the massacre was continued in Paris, the first three with inconceivable fury…. Noble and peasant, old and young, mother and child, were cut down together. Throughout France the butchery continued for two months. 70,000 of the very flower of the nation perished.

273.1 – The same master spirit that urged on the St. Bartholomew Massacre led also in the scenes of the Revolution. Jesus Christ was declared to be an impostor, and the rallying cry of the French infidels was, *"Crush the Wretch,"* meaning Christ. Heaven-daring blasphemy and abominable wickedness went hand in hand, and the basest of men, the most abandoned monsters of cruelty and vice, were most highly exalted. In all this, supreme homage was paid to Satan; while Christ, in His characteristics of truth, purity, and unselfish love, was crucified.

Discuss the end result of rejecting God.

How do the events in France inform us as we draw closer to the end of earth's history?

9. Read Ephesians 6:10-18 and the following GC paragraphs:

284.2 – All this was as Satan would have it. This was what for ages he had been working to secure. His policy is deception from first to last, and his steadfast purpose is to bring woe and wretchedness upon men, to deface and defile the workmanship of God, to mar the divine purposes of benevolence and love, and thus cause grief in heaven. Then by his deceptive arts he blinds the minds of men, and leads them to throw back the blame of his work upon God, as if all this misery were the result of the Creator's plan. In like manner, when those who have been degraded and brutalized through his cruel power achieve their freedom, he urges them on to excesses and atrocities. Then this picture of unbridled license is pointed out by tyrants and oppressors as an illustration of the results of liberty.

285.1 – When error in one garb has been detected, Satan only masks it in a different disguise, and multitudes receive it as eagerly as at the first. When the people found Romanism to be a deception, and he could not through this agency lead them to transgression of God's law, he urged them to regard all religion as a cheat, and the Bible as a fable; and, casting aside the divine statutes, they gave themselves up to unbridled iniquity.

Discuss the importance of understanding that Satan will use any and all masks and disguises at his disposal to deceive?

How do we protect ourselves?

One of the outcomes of the French Revolution was a great revival of interest in the Bible (see Revelation 11:10-11):

- *The 2nd Great Awakening – the religious movement of the early 19th century – began in the US in 1795.*
- *"Numerous Bible societies were founded from the beginning of the 19th century in the wake of the missionary societies established between 1792 and 1800 in England, Holland, and Germany. The British and Foreign Bible Society was founded in 1804, the Bible Society of Basle in 1804, that of Berlin in 1805, Holland in 1814, Norway in 1815, the American Bible Society in 1816, and the Société Biblique de Paris in 1818." – www.encyclopedia.com*

These Great Bible and Missionary Societies spread the gospel across the world like never before in history.

Lesson 11

The Netherlands and Scandinavia

(see Chapter 13)

In the Netherlands, 700 years before Luther, 2 bishops protested against papal tyranny. In part, this was their indictment against the abuses they saw: *… You set up yourself in the temple of God; instead of a pastor, you are become a wolf to the sheep; . . . you would make us believe you are a supreme bishop, but you rather behave like a tyrant. . . . Whereas you ought to be a servant of servants, as you call yourself, you endeavor to become a lord of lords. . . . You bring the commands of God into contempt…* {GC 237.1}

Read the following GC paragraphs. Discuss the impact of the Reformation in The Netherlands (Holland), Denmark and Sweden:

The Netherlands

238.3 – … From one of the provinces of Holland came Menno Simons. Educated a Roman Catholic and ordained to the priesthood, he was wholly ignorant of the Bible, and he would not read it for fear of being beguiled into heresy. When a doubt concerning the doctrine of transubstantiation (The bread and wine of Communion becoming the literal body and blood of Jesus). forced itself upon him, he regarded it as a temptation from Satan, and by prayer and confession sought to free himself from it; but in vain… After a time he was led to the study of the New Testament, and this, with Luther's writings, caused him to accept the reformed faith. He soon after witnessed in a neighboring village the beheading of a man who was put to death for having been rebaptized. This led him to study the Bible in regard to infant baptism. He could find no evidence for it in the Scriptures, but saw that repentance and faith are everywhere required as the condition of receiving baptism.

239.1-2 – Menno withdrew from the Roman Church and devoted his life to teaching the truths which he had received…. For 25 years he traveled, with his wife and children, enduring great hardships and privations, and frequently in peril of his life. He traversed the Netherlands and northern Germany, laboring chiefly among the humbler classes but exerting a widespread influence. Naturally eloquent, though possessing a limited education, he was a man of unwavering integrity, of humble spirit and gentle manners, and of sincere and earnest piety, exemplifying in his own life the precepts which he taught, and he commanded the confidence of the people. His followers were scattered and oppressed. They suffered greatly from being confounded with the fanatical Munsterites. Yet great numbers were converted under his labors.

239.3 – Nowhere were the reformed doctrines more generally received than in the Netherlands. In few countries did their adherents endure more terrible persecution. In Germany Charles V had banned the Reformation, and he would gladly have brought all its adherents to the stake; but the princes stood up as a barrier against his tyranny. In the Netherlands his power was greater, and persecuting edicts followed each other in quick succession. To read the Bible, to hear or preach it, or even to speak concerning it, was to incur the penalty of death by the stake. To pray to God in secret, to refrain from bowing to an image, or to sing a psalm, was also punishable with death….

240.2 – The rage of the persecutors was equaled by the faith of the martyrs. Not only men but delicate women and young maidens displayed unflinching courage. *"Wives would take their stand by their husband's stake, and while he was enduring the fire they would whisper words of solace, or sing psalms to cheer him." "Young maidens would lie down in their living grave as if they were entering into their chamber of nightly sleep; or go forth to the scaffold and the fire, dressed in their best apparel, as if they were going to their marriage."*

204.3 – … Persecution served to increase the number of witnesses for the truth. Year after year the monarch, stung to madness by the unconquerable determination of the people, urged on his cruel work; but in vain. Under William III of Orange (1650-1702) the Revolution at last brought to Holland freedom to worship God.

Denmark

240.4 – In the mountains of Piedmont, on the plains of France and the shores of Holland, the progress of the gospel was marked with the blood of its disciples. But in the countries of the North it found a peaceful entrance. Students at Wittenberg, returning to their homes, carried the reformed faith to Scandinavia. The publication of Luther's writings also spread the light. The simple, hardy people of the North turned from the corruption, the pomp, and the superstitions of Rome, to welcome the purity, the simplicity, and the life-giving truths of the Bible.

241.1 – Tausen, *"the Reformer of Denmark,"* was a peasant's son. The boy early gave evidence of vigorous intellect; he thirsted for an education; but this was denied him by the circumstances of his parents, and he entered a cloister. Here the purity of his life, together with his diligence and fidelity, won the favor of his superior. Examination showed him to possess talent that promised at some future day good service to the church. It was determined to give him an education at some one of the universities of Germany or the Netherlands. The young student was granted permission to choose a school for himself, with one proviso, that he must not go to Wittenberg. The scholar of the church was not to be endangered by the poison of heresy. So said the friars.

241.2 – Tausen went to Cologne… Here he soon became disgusted with the mysticisms of the schoolmen. About the same time he obtained Luther's writings. He read them with wonder and delight, and greatly desired to enjoy the personal instruction of the Reformer. But to do so he must risk giving offense to his monastic superior and forfeiting his support. His decision was soon made, and erelong he was enrolled as a student at Wittenberg.

241.3 – On returning to Denmark, he again repaired to his cloister. No one as yet suspected him of Lutheranism; he did not reveal his secret, but endeavored, without exciting the prejudices of his companions, to lead them to a purer faith and a holier life. He opened the Bible, and explained its true meaning, and at last preached Christ to them as the sinner's righteousness and his only hope of salvation. Great was the wrath of the prior… He was at once removed from his own monastery to another and confined to his cell under strict supervision.

242.1 – To the terror of his new guardians several of the monks soon declared themselves converts to Protestantism. Through the bars of his cell Tausen had communicated to his companions a knowledge of the truth. Had those Danish fathers been skilled in the church's plan of dealing with heresy, Tausen's voice would never again have been heard; but instead of consigning him to a tomb in some underground dungeon, they expelled him from the monastery. Now they were powerless. A royal edict, just issued, offered protection to the teachers of the new doctrine. Tausen began to preach. The churches were opened to him, and the people thronged to listen. Others also were preaching the word of God. The New Testament, translated into the Danish tongue, was widely circulated. The efforts made by the papists to overthrow the work resulted in extending it, and erelong Denmark declared its acceptance of the reformed faith.

Sweden

242.2 – In Sweden, also, young men who had drunk from the well of Wittenberg carried the water of life to their countrymen. Two of the leaders in the Swedish Reformation, Olaf and Laurentius Petri, the sons of a blacksmith of Orebro, studied under Luther and Melanchthon, and the truths which they thus learned they were diligent to teach…. Olaf aroused the people by his zeal and eloquence, while Laurentius, was learned, thoughtful, and calm. Both were men of ardent piety, of high theological attainments, and of unflinching courage in advancing the truth. Papist opposition was not lacking…. These Reformers, however, were favored and protected by the king.

243.2 – In the presence of the monarch and the leading men of Sweden, Olaf Petri with great ability defended the doctrines of the reformed faith against the Romish champions. He declared that the teachings of the Fathers are to be received only when in accordance with the Scriptures; that the essential doctrines of the faith are presented in the Bible in a clear and simple manner, so that all men may understand them…. He showed that the decrees of the church are of no authority when in opposition to the commands of God, and maintained the great Protestant principle that *"the Bible and the Bible only"* is the rule of faith and practice.

243.3 – This contest, though conducted upon a stage comparatively obscure, serves to show us *"the sort of men that formed the rank and file of the army of the Reformers. They were not illiterate, sectarian, noisy controversialists – far from it; they were men who had studied the word of God, and knew well how to wield the weapons with which the armory of the Bible supplied them…. Scholars and theologians; men who have thoroughly mastered the whole system of gospel truth, and who win an easy victory over the sophists of the schools and the dignitaries of Rome."*

244.1 – As the result of this disputation the King of Sweden (Gustav I) accepted the Protestant faith, and not long afterward the national assembly declared in its favor. The New Testament had been translated by Olaf Petri into the Swedish language, and at the desire of the king the two brothers undertook the translation of the whole Bible. Thus for the first time the people of Sweden received the word of God in their native tongue. It was ordered by the Diet that throughout the kingdom, ministers should explain the Scriptures and that the children in the schools should be taught to read the Bible.

244.2 – Steadily and surely the darkness of ignorance and superstition was dispelled by the blessed light of the gospel. Freed from Romish oppression, the nation attained to a strength and greatness it had never before reached. Sweden became one of the bulwarks of Protestantism. A century later, at a time of sorest peril, this small and hitherto feeble nation – the only one in Europe that dared lend a helping hand – came to the deliverance of Germany in the terrible struggle of the 30 Years' War. All Northern Europe seemed about to be brought again under the tyranny of Rome. It was the armies of Sweden that enabled Germany to turn the tide of popish success, to win toleration for the Protestants – and to restore liberty of conscience to those countries that had accepted the Reformation.

Lesson 12

England and Scotland

(see Chapter 14)

William Tyndale was a contemporary of Martin Luther and while Luther was opening the Bible to the people of Germany, Tyndale was doing the same in England.

When John Wycliffe translated the Bible, he did so from Latin, which contained many errors. It had never been printed and because it cost so much to hand-produce, only a few of the wealthy men of England had a copy.

In 1516 Erasmus published the New Testament in Greek and Latin. Many of the errors were corrected and it was easier to read. Tyndale, using the work of Erasmus, completed the work Wycliffe had started.

1. Read the following GC paragraphs and discuss the contribution of William Tyndale to the English Reformation:

245.2 – … He fearlessly preached his convictions, urging that all doctrines be tested by the Scriptures. To the papist claim that the church had given the Bible, and the church alone could explain it, Tyndale responded: *"Do you know who taught the eagles to find their prey? Well, that same God teaches His hungry children to find their Father in His word. Far from having given us the Scriptures, it is you who have hidden them from us; it is you who burn those who teach them, and if you could, you would burn the Scriptures themselves."*

246.1 – Tyndale's preaching excited great interest; many accepted the truth. But the priests were on the alert, and no sooner had he left the field than they by their threats and misrepresentations endeavored to destroy his work. Too often they succeeded…. *"Oh! if Christians possessed the Holy Scriptures in their own tongue, they could of themselves withstand these sophists. Without the Bible it is impossible to establish the laity in the truth."*

246.4 – … Tyndale immediately applied himself to the work (of giving the people the New Testament in their own language). Driven from his home by persecution, he went to London … again the violence of the papists forced him to flee (he went to Germany). Here he began the printing of the English New Testament. Twice the work was stopped … At last he made his way to Worms, where, a few years before, Luther had defended the gospel before the Diet. In that ancient city were many friends of the Reformation …. 3000 copies of the New Testament were soon finished, and another edition followed in the same year.

247.1 – …. the word of God was in various ways secretly conveyed to London and thence circulated throughout the country. The papists attempted to suppress the truth, but in vain. The bishop of Durham at one time bought of a bookseller who was a friend of Tyndale his whole stock of Bibles, for the purpose of destroying them, supposing that this would greatly hinder the work. But, on the contrary, the money thus furnished, purchased material for a new and better edition, which, but for this, could not have been published.

247.2 – Tyndale was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and at one time suffered imprisonment for many months. He finally witnessed for his faith by a martyr's death; but the weapons which he prepared have enabled other soldiers to do battle through all the centuries even to our time.

2. Read the following GC paragraphs and discuss the contribution of John Knox to the Scottish Reformation:

249.2 – … In the 12th century, however, popery became established (in Scotland), and in no country did it exercise a more absolute sway. Nowhere was the darkness deeper. Still there came rays of light to pierce the gloom and give promise of the coming day….

249.3 – With the opening of the Great Reformation came the writings of Luther, and then Tyndale's English New Testament. Unnoticed by the hierarchy, these messengers silently traversed the mountains and valleys, kindling into new life the torch of truth so nearly extinguished in Scotland, and undoing the work which Rome for four centuries of oppression had done.

249.4 – … The papist leaders, suddenly awakening to the danger that threatened their cause, brought to the stake some of the noblest and most honored of the sons of Scotland. They did but erect a pulpit, from which the words of these dying witnesses were heard throughout the land, thrilling the souls of the people with an undying purpose to cast off the shackles of Rome.

250.2 – John Knox had turned away from the traditions and mysticisms of the church, to feed upon the truths of God's word; and the teaching of Wishart had confirmed his determination to forsake the communion of Rome and join himself to the persecuted Reformers.

250.3 – Urged by his companions to take the office of preacher, he shrank with trembling from its responsibility, and it was only after days of seclusion and painful conflict with himself that he consented. But having once accepted the position, he pressed forward with inflexible determination and undaunted courage as long as life continued. This truehearted Reformer feared not the face of man. The fires of martyrdom, blazing around him, served only to quicken his zeal to greater intensity. With the tyrant's ax held menacingly over his head, he stood his ground, striking sturdy blows on the right hand and on the left to demolish idolatry.

250.4-5 – When brought face to face with the Queen of Scotland (Mary), in whose presence the zeal of many a leader of the Protestants had abated, John Knox bore unswerving witness for the truth… The queen charged him with heresy. He had taught the people to receive a religion prohibited by the state, she declared, and had thus transgressed God's command enjoining subjects to obey their princes. Knox answered firmly: … *"If all the seed of Abraham had been of the religion of Pharaoh, whose subjects they long were, I pray you, madam, what religion would there have been in the world? Or if all men in the days of the apostles had been of the religion of the Roman emperors, what religion would there have been upon the face of the earth? . . . And so, madam, ye may perceive that subjects are not bound to the religion of their princes, albeit they are commanded to give them obedience."*

251.1-2 – Said Mary: *"Ye interpret the Scriptures in one manner, and they [the Roman Catholic teachers] interpret in another; whom shall I believe, and who shall be judge?" "Ye shall believe God, that plainly speaketh in His word,"* answered the Reformer; *"and farther than the word teaches you, ye neither shall believe the one nor the other. The word of God is plain in itself; and if there appear any obscurity in one place, the Holy Ghost, which is never contrary to Himself, explains the same more clearly in other places, so that there can remain no doubt but unto such as obstinately remain ignorant."*

251.3 – Such were the truths that the fearless Reformer, at the peril of his life, spoke in the ear of royalty. With the same undaunted courage he kept to his purpose, praying and fighting the battles of the Lord, until Scotland was free from popery.

By 1600 the Protestant Reformation was largely over – it had lasted just 100 years. By that time Lutheranism, Calvinism, The Church of England and Presbyterianism were all in competition with Catholicism. Unfortunately, the passion of the Reformers soon gave way to in-fighting, intolerance, compromise, formalism and tradition.

The Great Awakening

Lesson 13

John and Charles Wesley

(see Chapter 14)

We will turn our attention to John and Charles Wesley. Both were born in the 1st decade of 1700's. By that time spiritual darkness had again descended and the great doctrine of Justification by Faith had been almost entirely lost. It was the Wesley brothers whom God called to be light bearers – not only in England, but also in the Colonies of North America.

They met George Whitefield (1714-1770) at Oxford University. All 3 men would play a leading role in the Great Awakening and the early Methodist movement.

The Great Awakening was a religious revival of the 1720s-1740s that occurred in the British American colonies. It was part of a larger religious revival that swept across England and Europe. In the American colonies, it was a reaction against the increasing secularization of society and the corporate and materialistic nature of the principal churches.

1. Read Romans 3:21-24, 28; 4:2-5; 5:1-2; 10:9-10; Gal. 2:16; 5:1; Titus 3:4-7 and the following GC paragraphs:

253.1-2 – … Under the rule of the established church the people of England had lapsed into a state of religious declension hardly to be distinguished from heathenism…. The great doctrine of justification by faith, so clearly taught by Luther, had been almost wholly lost sight of; and the Romish principle of trusting to good works for salvation, had taken its place. Whitefield and the Wesleys, who were members of the established church, were sincere seekers for the favor of God, and this they had been taught was to be secured by a virtuous life and an observance of the ordinances of religion.

254.1 – Wesley and his associates were led to see that true religion is seated in the heart, and that God's law extends to the thoughts as well as to the words and actions. Convinced of the necessity of holiness of heart, as well as correctness of outward deportment, they set out in earnest upon a new life. By the most diligent and prayerful efforts they endeavored to subdue the evils of the natural heart. They lived a life of self-denial, charity, and humiliation, observing with great rigor and exactness every measure which they thought could be helpful to them in obtaining what they most desired--that holiness which could secure the favor of God. But they did not obtain the object which they sought. In vain were their endeavors to free themselves from the condemnation of sin or to break its power….

"Justification by Faith" is clearly a teaching of Scripture. How is it so easily overlooked in favor of "*Justification by Me"* (works)? How do we guard against the teaching that we can work our way to heaven?

2. Read Joshua 1:9; Ps. 56:3-4; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8 and the following GC paragraphs:

254.2 – The fires of divine truth, well-nigh extinguished upon the altars of Protestantism, were to be rekindled from the ancient torch handed down the ages by the Bohemian Christians. After the Reformation, Protestantism in Bohemia had been trampled out by the hordes of Rome. All who refused to renounce the truth were forced to flee. Some of these, finding refuge in Saxony, there maintained the ancient faith. It was from the descendants of these Christians that light came to Wesley and his associates.

254.3 – John and Charles Wesley, after being ordained to the ministry, were sent on a mission to America. On board the ship was a company of Moravians. Violent storms were encountered on the passage, and John Wesley, brought face to face with death, felt that he had not the assurance of peace with God. The Germans, on the contrary, manifested a calmness and trust to which he was a stranger.

255.2 – Upon arriving in Savannah, Wesley for a short time abode with the Moravians, and was deeply impressed with their Christian deportment. Of one of their religious services, in striking contrast to the lifeless formalism of the Church of England, he wrote: "*The great simplicity as well as solemnity of the whole almost made me forget the 1700 years between, and imagine myself in one of those assemblies where form and state were not; but Paul, the tentmaker, or Peter, the fisherman, presided; yet with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power."*

255.3 – On his return to England, Wesley, under the instruction of a Moravian preacher, arrived at a clearer understanding of Bible faith. He was convinced that he must renounce all dependence upon his own works for salvation and must trust wholly to *"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."* At a meeting of the Moravian society in London a statement was read from Luther, describing the change which the Spirit of God works in the heart of the believer. As Wesley listened, faith was kindled in his soul. *"I felt my heart strangely warmed,"* he says. *"I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation: and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."*

256.1 – Through long years of wearisome and comfortless striving – years of rigorous self-denial, of reproach and humiliation – Wesley had steadfastly adhered to his one purpose of seeking God. Now he had found Him; and he found that the grace which he had toiled to win by prayers and fasts, by almsdeeds and self-abnegation, was a gift, *"without money and without price."*

Discuss the deep impression the Moravian Christians made on John Wesley and the example they set for us.

As members of the Church of England they were strongly attached to her forms of worship, but the Lord had presented before them in His word a higher standard. The Holy Spirit urged them to preach Christ and Him crucified. The power of the Highest attended their labors. Thousands were convicted and truly converted. It was necessary that these sheep be protected from ravening wolves. Wesley had no thought of forming a new denomination, but he organized them under what was called the Methodist Connection.

Mysterious and trying was the opposition which these preachers encountered from the established church; yet God, in His wisdom, had overruled events to cause the reform to begin within the church itself. Had it come wholly from without, it would not have penetrated where it was so much needed. But as the revival preachers were churchmen, and labored within the pale of the church wherever they could find opportunity, the truth had an entrance where the doors would otherwise have remained closed. Some of the clergy were roused from their moral stupor and became zealous preachers … Churches that had been petrified by formalism were quickened into life.

3. Read Luke 4:16-21, 28-30; Act 12:5-10; 14:19-20 and the following GC paragraphs – Discuss:

258.1-2 – The servants of God trod a rugged path. Men of influence – employed their powers against them. After a time many of the clergy manifested determined hostility, and the doors of the churches were closed against a pure faith and those who proclaimed it…. Again and again did John Wesley escape death by a miracle of God's mercy. When the rage of the mob was excited against him, and there seemed no way of escape, an angel in human form came to his side, the mob fell back, and the servant of Christ passed in safety from the place of danger…. Of his deliverance from the enraged mob on one of these occasions, Wesley said: *"Many endeavored to throw me down while we were going down hill on a slippery path to the town; as well judging that if I was once on the ground, I should hardly rise any more. But I made no stumble at all, nor the least slip, till I was entirely out of their hands… A lusty man just behind, struck at me several times, with a large oaken stick; with which if he had struck me once on the back part of my head, it would have saved him all further trouble. But every time, the blow was turned aside, I know not how; for I could not move to the right hand or left…"*

259.2 – The Methodists of those early days – endured ridicule and persecution, alike from church members and from the openly irreligious who were inflamed by their misrepresentations. They were arraigned before courts of *"justice"* – for justice was rare in the courts of that time. Often they suffered violence from their persecutors. Mobs went from house to house, destroying, plundering and brutally abusing men, women, and children. In some instances, public notices were posted, calling upon those who desired to assist in breaking the windows and robbing the houses of the Methodists, to assemble at a given time and place. These open violations of both human and divine law were allowed to pass without a reprimand. A systematic persecution was carried on against a people whose only fault was that of seeking to turn the feet of sinners from the path of destruction to the path of holiness.

4. Read Psalm 19:7-10; 40:8; Matthew 5:17-18; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Ephesians 3:16-21; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; Hebrews 10:26; James 2:14-26; 1 John 1:8 and the following GC paragraphs:

260.2 – The spiritual declension which had been manifest in England just before the time of Wesley was in great degree the result of antinomian teaching.

- Antinomianism *is a doctrine that suggests that Christians are freed by grace from the necessity of obeying the Mosaic Law. Theologically, it posits that there are no moral laws that God expects Christians to obey, as the good life flows from the inner working of the Holy Spirit. In a broader sense, an* **antinomian** *is someone who believes that under the gospel dispensation of grace, the moral law is of no use or obligation.*

Many affirmed that Christ had abolished the moral law and that Christians are therefore under no obligation to observe it; that a believer is freed from the *"bondage of good works."* Others, though admitting the perpetuity of the law, declared that it was unnecessary for ministers to exhort the people to obedience of its precepts, since those whom God had elected to salvation would, *"by the irresistible impulse of divine grace, be led to the practice of piety and virtue,"* while those who were doomed to eternal reprobation *"did not have power to obey the divine law."*

261.1 – Others, also holding that *"the elect cannot fall from grace nor forfeit the divine favor,"*

- Predestination: *is the doctrine that God, in His sovereignty, chooses who is saved and who is lost.*

arrived at the still more hideous conclusion that *"the wicked actions they commit are not really sinful, nor to be considered as instances of their violation of the divine law, and that, consequently, they have no occasion either to confess their sins or to break them off by repentance."… "Therefore, they declared that even one of the vilest of sins, considered universally an enormous violation of the divine law, is not a sin in the sight of God, if committed by one of the elect, because it is one of the essential and distinctive characteristics of the elect, that they cannot do anything that is either displeasing to God or prohibited by the law."*

261.2 – These monstrous doctrines are essentially the same as the later teaching of popular educators and theologians – that there is no unchangeable divine law as the standard of right, but that the standard of morality is indicated by society itself, and has constantly been subject to change. All these ideas are inspired by the same master spirit – by him who, even among the sinless inhabitants of heaven, began his work of seeking to break down the righteous restraints of the law of God.

261.3 – The doctrine of the divine decrees, unalterably fixing the character of men, had led many to a virtual rejection of the law of God. Wesley steadfastly opposed the errors of the antinomian teachers and showed that this doctrine which led to antinomianism was contrary to the Scriptures…. Men fail of salvation through their own willful refusal of the gift of life.

262.1-263.1 – In answer to the claim that at the death of Christ the precepts of the Decalogue had been abolished with the ceremonial law, Wesley said: *"The moral law, contained in the Ten Commandments and enforced by the prophets, He did not take away….. the letters once wrote by the finger of God are now in a great measure defaced by sin, yet can they not wholly be blotted out, while we have any consciousness of good and evil. Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind, and in all ages; as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change, but on the nature of God, and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other" …. "There is, therefore, the closest connection that can be conceived, between the law and the gospel. On the one hand, the law continually makes way for, and points us to, the gospel; on the other, the gospel continually leads us to a more exact fulfilling of the law. The law, for instance, requires us to love God, to love our neighbor, to be meek, humble, or holy. We feel that … yea, 'with man this is impossible;' but we see a promise of God to give us that love, and to make us humble, meek, and holy: we lay hold of this gospel, of these glad tidings; it is done unto us according to our faith; and 'the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us,' through faith which is in Christ Jesus."….*

Discuss the balancing act between Justification by Faith and obedience to the Law. Can there be one without the other? What are the dangers of placing one above the other?

Thus while preaching the gospel of the grace of God, Wesley, like his Master, sought to "magnify the law, and make it honorable." Faithfully did he accomplish the work given him of God, and glorious were the results which he was permitted to behold. At the close of his long life …. his avowed adherents numbered more than half a million souls. But the multitude that through his labors had been lifted from the ruin and degradation of sin to a higher and a purer life, and the number who by his teaching had attained to a deeper and richer experience, will never be known till the whole family of the redeemed shall be gathered into the kingdom of God. His life presents a lesson of priceless worth to every Christian. Would that the faith and humility, the untiring zeal, self-sacrifice, and devotion of this servant of Christ might be reflected in the churches of today!

Lesson 14

The Pilgrim Fathers

(see Chapter 16)

1. Read the following GC paragraphs:

289.1 – The English Reformers, while renouncing the doctrines of Romanism, had retained many of its forms. Thus though the authority and the creed of Rome were rejected, not a few of her customs and ceremonies were incorporated into the worship of the Church of England. It was claimed that these things were not matters of conscience; that though they were not commanded in Scripture, and hence were nonessential, yet not being forbidden, they were not intrinsically evil. Their observance tended to narrow the gulf which separated the reformed churches from Rome, and it was urged that they would promote the acceptance of the Protestant faith by Romanists.

289.2 – To the conservative and compromising, these arguments seemed conclusive. But there was another class that did not so judge. The fact that these customs *"tended to bridge over the chasm between Rome and the Reformation,"* was in their view a conclusive argument against retaining them. They looked upon them as badges of the slavery from which they had been delivered and to which they had no disposition to return. They reasoned that God has in His word established the regulations governing His worship, and that men are not at liberty to add to these or to detract from them. The very beginning of the great apostasy was in seeking to supplement the authority of God by that of the church. Rome began by enjoining what God had not forbidden, and she ended by forbidding what He had explicitly enjoined.

290.1 – Many earnestly desired to return to the purity and simplicity which characterized the primitive church. They regarded many of the established customs of the English Church as monuments of idolatry, and they could not in conscience unite in her worship. But the church, being supported by the civil authority, would permit no dissent from her forms. Attendance upon her service was required by law, and unauthorized assemblies for religious worship were prohibited, under penalty of imprisonment, exile, and death.

290.2 – At the opening of the seventeenth century the monarch who had just ascended the throne of England (James 1 and 6 came to the throne of England in 1603) declared his determination to make the Puritans *"conform, or . . . harry them out of the land, or else worse."* Hunted, persecuted, and imprisoned, they could discern in the future no promise of better days, and many yielded to the conviction that for such as would serve God according to the dictates of their conscience, *"England was ceasing forever to be a habitable place."* Some at last determined to seek refuge in Holland. Difficulties, losses, and imprisonment were encountered. Their purposes were thwarted, and they were betrayed into the hands of their enemies. But steadfast perseverance finally conquered, and they found shelter on the friendly shores of the Dutch Republic.

Discuss the arguments for compromise and the arguments against. What were the results?

2. Read Joshua 1:9; Deuteronomy 26:8-9; Jeremiah 29:11; Acts 8:1-4 and the following GC paragraphs:

291.1 – In the midst of exile and hardship their love and faith waxed strong. They trusted the Lord's promises, and He did not fail them in time of need. His angels were by their side, to encourage and support them. And when God's hand seemed pointing them across the sea, to a land where they might found for themselves a state, and leave to their children the precious heritage of religious liberty, they went forward, without shrinking, in the path of providence.

291.2 – God had permitted trials to come upon His people to prepare them for the accomplishment of His gracious purpose toward them. The church had been brought low, that she might be exalted. God was about to display His power in her behalf, to give to the world another evidence that He will not forsake those who trust in Him. He had overruled events to cause the wrath of Satan and the plots of evil men to advance His glory and to bring His people to a place of security. Persecution and exile were opening the way to freedom.

Discuss how God leads His people even when the night seems the darkest.

How does God's faithfulness in the past give us confidence for the future?

3. Read Ecclesiastes 1:9; John 18:36; Revelation 13:11-17, the following quotes and GC paragraphs:

- *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it* – George Santayana
- *What we learn from history is that people don't learn from history* – Warren Buffet

292.3 – It was the desire for liberty of conscience that inspired the Pilgrims to brave the perils of the long journey across the sea, to endure the hardships and dangers of the wilderness, and with God's blessing to lay, on the shores of America, the foundation of a mighty nation. Yet honest and God-fearing as they were, the Pilgrims did not yet comprehend the great principle of religious liberty. The freedom which they sacrificed so much to secure for themselves, they were not equally ready to grant to others….. The doctrine that God has committed to the church the right to control the conscience, and to define and punish heresy, is one of the most deeply rooted of papal errors. While the Reformers rejected the creed of Rome, they were not entirely free from her spirit of intolerance. The dense darkness in which, through the long ages of her rule, popery had enveloped all Christendom, had not even yet been wholly dissipated….. The regulation was adopted by the colonists that only church members should have a voice in the civil government. A kind of state church was formed, all the people being required to contribute to the support of the clergy, and the magistrates being authorized to suppress heresy. Thus the secular power was in the hands of the church. It was not long before these measures led to the inevitable result – persecution.

297.1 – The regulation adopted by the early colonists, of permitting only members of the church to vote or to hold office in the civil government, led to most pernicious results. This measure had been accepted as a means of preserving the purity of the state, but it resulted in the corruption of the church. A profession of religion being the condition of suffrage and officeholding, many, actuated solely by motives of worldly policy, united with the church without a change of heart. Thus the churches came to consist, to a considerable extent, of unconverted persons; and even in the ministry were those who not only held errors of doctrine, but who were ignorant of the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. Thus again was demonstrated the evil results, so often witnessed in the history of the church from the days of Constantine to the present, of attempting to build up the church by the aid of the state.... The union of the church with the state, be the degree never so slight, while it may appear to bring the world nearer to the church, does in reality but bring the church nearer to the world.

297.2 – The great principle so nobly advocated by Robinson and Roger Williams, that truth is progressive, that Christians should stand ready to accept all the light which may shine from God's holy word, was lost sight of by their descendants. The Protestant churches of America – and those of Europe as well – so highly favored in receiving the blessings of the Reformation, failed to press forward in the path of reform. Though a few faithful men arose, from time to time, to proclaim new truth and expose long-cherished error, the majority, like the Jews in Christ's day or the papists in the time of Luther, were content to believe as their fathers had believed and to live as they had lived. Therefore religion again degenerated into formalism; and errors and superstitions which would have been cast aside had the church continued to walk in the light of God's word, were retained and cherished. Thus the spirit inspired by the Reformation gradually died out, until there was almost as great need of reform in the Protestant churches as in the Roman Church in the time of Luther. There was the same worldliness and spiritual stupor, a similar reverence for the opinions of men, and substitution of human theories for the teachings of God's word.

298.1 – ... Satan could not, as in former ages, keep God's word from the people; it had been placed within the reach of all; but in order still to accomplish his object, he led many to value it but lightly. Men neglected to search the Scriptures, and thus they continued to accept false interpretations, and to cherish doctrines which had no foundation in the Bible.

298.2 – Seeing the failure of his efforts to crush out the truth by persecution, Satan had again resorted to the plan of compromise which led to the great apostasy and the formation of the Church of Rome. He had induced Christians to ally themselves, not now with pagans, but with those who, by their devotion to the things of this world, had proved themselves to be as truly idolaters as were the worshipers of graven images. And the results of this union were no less pernicious now than in former ages; pride and extravagance were fostered under the guise of religion, and the churches became corrupted. Satan continued to pervert the doctrines of the Bible, and traditions that were to ruin millions were taking deep root.... Thus were degraded the principles for which the Reformers had done and suffered so much.

It has been over 400 years since the Mayflower brought the 1st religious freedom seekers to the shores of North America, yet it did not take long for them to move from Persecuted to Persecutor. Discuss the importance of understanding and learning from the past as a safeguard to the decisions we make now.

4. Read Romans 14:5 and the following GC paragraphs. Discuss the contributions and legacy of Roger Williams:

293.1 – Eleven years after the planting of the first colony, Roger Williams came to the New World (1631). Like the early Pilgrims he came to enjoy religious freedom; but, unlike them, he saw--what so few in his time had yet seen--that this freedom was the inalienable right of all, whatever might be their creed.... Williams *"was the first person in modern Christendom to establish civil government on the doctrine of the liberty of conscience, the equality of opinions before the law."* …

294.2 – Roger Williams was respected and beloved as a faithful minister, a man of rare gifts, of unbending integrity and true benevolence; yet his steadfast denial of the right of civil magistrates to authority over the church, and his demand for religious liberty, could not be tolerated. The application of this new doctrine, it was urged, would *"subvert the fundamental state and government of the country."* He was sentenced to banishment from the colonies (Oct 1635), and, finally, to avoid arrest, he was forced to flee, amid the cold and storms of winter, into the unbroken forest (Jan 1636).

295.1 – Making his way at last, after months of change and wandering, to the shores of Narragansett Bay, he there laid the foundation of the first state of modern times that in the fullest sense recognized the right of religious freedom. The fundamental principle of Roger Williams's colony was *"that every man should have liberty to worship God according to the light of his own conscience."* His little state, Rhode Island, became the asylum of the oppressed, and it increased and prospered until its foundation principles – civil and religious liberty – became the cornerstones of the American Republic.

296.1 – As the tidings spread through the countries of Europe, of a land where every man might enjoy the fruit of his own labor and obey the convictions of his own conscience, thousands flocked to the shores of the New World....

The 2nd Great Awakening

Lesson 15

Heralds of the Morning

(see Chapter 17)

1. Read Psalm 96:11-13; Isaiah 25:7-9; Matthew 25:31-32; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; Revelation 1:7 and the following GC paragraphs:

299.1 – One of the most solemn and yet most glorious truths revealed in the Bible is that of Christ's second coming to complete the great work of redemption.... The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures.....

302.2 – … The Saviour's parting promise upon Olivet, that He would come again, lighted up the future for His disciples, filling their hearts with joy and hope that sorrow could not quench nor trials dim. Amid suffering and persecution, the *"appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"* was the *"blessed hope."*

302.4 – From the dungeon, the stake, the scaffold, where saints and martyrs witnessed for the truth, comes down the centuries the utterance of their faith and hope.... They were willing to go down to the grave, that they might *"rise free."* …

How did the hope of the 2nd Coming of Jesus sustain God's people in times past and how that same hope can sustain us today.

2. Read Isaiah 13:10-11; Joel 2:1, 12-13, 15-17, 31; Zephaniah 1:12-18; Mark 13:24-26; Luke 17:26-30; 21:34-36; Revelation 6:12-13 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

304.1 – Prophecy not only foretells the manner and object of Christ's coming, but presents tokens by which men are to know when it is near.....

Lisbon Earthquake – November 1, 1755

304.2 – … In fulfillment of this prophecy (Rev. 6:12) there occurred, in the year 1755, the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded. Though commonly known as the earthquake of Lisbon, it extended to the greater part of Europe, Africa, and America. It was felt in Greenland, in the West Indies, in the island of Madeira, in Norway and Sweden, Great Britain and Ireland. It pervaded an extent of not less than four million square miles. In Africa the shock was almost as severe as in Europe. A great part of Algiers was destroyed; and a short distance from Morocco, a village containing 8-10 thousand inhabitants was swallowed up. A vast wave swept over the coast of Spain and Africa engulfing cities and causing great destruction.

305.1-2 – … In the course of about 6 minutes 60,000 persons perished.... *"The earthquake happened on a holyday, when the churches and convents were full of people, very few of whom escaped."*… It has been estimated that 90 thousand persons lost their lives on that fatal day.

Sun and Moon Darkened – May 19, 1780

306.1 – 25 years later appeared the next sign mentioned in the prophecy – the darkening of the sun and moon. What rendered this more striking was the fact that the time of its fulfillment had been definitely pointed out…. He (Jesus) mentioned certain events to precede His coming, and fixed the time when the first of these should be witnessed: *"In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light."* Mark 13:24. The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Following this persecution, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened.

306.3-4 – An eyewitness living in Massachusetts describes the event as follows: *"In the morning the sun rose clear, but was soon overcast. The clouds became lowery, and from them, black and ominous, as they soon appeared, lightning flashed, thunder rolled, and a little rain fell. Toward 9 o'clock, the clouds became thinner, and assumed a brassy or coppery appearance, and earth, rocks, trees, buildings, water, and persons were changed by this strange, unearthly light. A few minutes later, a heavy black cloud spread over the entire sky except a narrow rim at the horizon, and it was as dark as it usually is at nine o'clock on a summer evening…. Fear, anxiety, and awe gradually filled the minds of the people…."*

307.1, 3 – *"Candles were used; and hearth fires shone as brightly as on a moonless evening in autumn. . . . Fowls retired to their roosts and went to sleep, cattle gathered at the pasture bars and lowed, frogs peeped, birds sang their evening songs, and bats flew about. But the human knew that night had not come. . . . "The extent of this darkness was extraordinary. It was observed as far east as Falmouth. To the westward it reached to the farthest part of Connecticut, and to Albany. To the southward, it was observed along the seacoasts; and to the north as far as the American settlements extend."*

307.4 – The intense darkness of the day was succeeded, an hour or two before evening, by a partially clear sky, and the sun appeared, though it was still obscured by the black, heavy mist…. After midnight the darkness disappeared, and the moon, when first visible, had the appearance of blood.

308.1 – May 19, 1780, stands in history as *"The Dark Day."* Since the time of Moses no period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration, has ever been recorded….

308.2 – Christ had bidden His people watch for the signs of His advent and rejoice as they should behold the tokens of their coming King…..

1700 years before the fact, Jesus gave his disciples signs of his coming and they happened just as he said they would. Discuss how this truth impacts you personally.

309.1 – But as the spirit of humility and devotion in the church had given place to pride and formalism, love for Christ and faith in His coming had grown cold. Absorbed in worldliness and pleasure seeking, the professed people of God were blinded to the Saviour's instructions concerning the signs of His appearing. The doctrine of the second advent had been neglected; the scriptures relating to it were obscured by misinterpretation, until it was, to a great extent, ignored and forgotten. Especially was this the case in the churches of America. The freedom and comfort enjoyed by all classes of society, the ambitious desire for wealth and luxury, begetting an absorbing devotion to money-making, the eager rush for popularity and power, which seemed to be within the reach of all, led men to center their interests and hopes on the things of this life, and to put far in the future that solemn day when the present order of things should pass away.

Ellen White first wrote The Great Controversy in 1888 and for her, the above paragraph was in the past, but it reads like a modern assessment of our world. Are there any take-aways or things we can learn?

309.2 – When the Saviour pointed out to His followers the signs of His return, He foretold the state of backsliding that would exist just prior to His second advent. There would be, as in the days of Noah, the activity and stir of worldly business and pleasure seeking – buying, selling, planting, building, marrying, and giving in marriage – with forgetfulness of God and the future life….

310.1 – It was needful that men should be awakened to their danger; that they should be roused to prepare for the solemn events connected with the close of probation…….

311.1 – In view of that great day the word of God, in the most solemn and impressive language, calls upon His people to arouse from their spiritual lethargy and to seek His face with repentance and humiliation:

311.2 – To prepare a people to stand in the day of God, a great work of reform was to be accomplished. God saw that many of His professed people were not building for eternity, and in His mercy He was about to send a message of warning to arouse them from their stupor and lead them to make ready for the coming of the Lord.

Why did Christ use such strong language to describe his 2nd Coming? What did he hope to accomplish?

In the previous section, Christ was about to send a message of warning to his people. The 3-fold message of Revelation 14 is immediately followed by Christ's 2nd Coming. The 1st Message (v. 6-7) announces the approaching judgment and is declared to be a part of *"the everlasting gospel."*

3. Read John 8:12; 12:35; and the following GC paragraphs:

312.1 – …. The work of preaching the gospel has not been committed to angels, but has been entrusted to men. Holy angels have been employed in directing this work, they have in charge the great movements for the salvation of men; but the actual proclamation of the gospel is performed by the servants of Christ upon the earth.

312.2 – Faithful men, who were obedient to the promptings of God's Spirit and the teachings of His word, were to proclaim this warning to the world…. They had been seeking the knowledge of God more than all hid treasures… And the Lord revealed to them the great things of the kingdom.

312.3 – It was not the scholarly theologians who had an understanding of this truth, and engaged in its proclamation. Had these been faithful watchmen, diligently and prayerfully searching the Scriptures, they would have known the time of night; the prophecies would have opened to them the events about to take place. But they did not occupy this position, and the message was given by humbler men…. Those who turn away from the

light which God has given, or who neglect to seek it when it is within their reach, are left in darkness…. Whoever is with singleness of purpose seeking to do God's will, earnestly heeding the light already given, will receive greater light; to that soul some star of heavenly radiance will be sent to guide him into all truth.

How did God choose the men he would task with spreading the 1st Message of Revelation 14? How should that inform our expectations today?

4. Read Matthew 7:21-24; John 5:37-40 and the following GC paragraphs:

313.1 – At the time of Christ's first advent the priests and scribes of the Holy City, to whom were entrusted the oracles of God, might have discerned the signs of the times and proclaimed the coming of the Promised One. The prophecy of Micah (5:2) designated His birthplace; Daniel specified the time of His advent (9:25) …. God committed these prophecies to the Jewish leaders; they were without excuse if they did not know and declare to the people that the Messiah's coming was at hand. Their ignorance was the result of sinful neglect….

313.2 – With profound and reverent interest the elders of Israel should have been studying the place, the time, the circumstances, of the greatest event in the world's history – the coming of the Son of God to accomplish the redemption of man. All the people should have been watching and waiting that they might be among the first to welcome the world's Redeemer. But, lo, at Bethlehem two weary travelers from the hills of Nazareth traverse the whole length of the narrow street to the eastern extremity of the town, vainly seeking a place of rest and shelter for the night. No doors are open to receive them. In a wretched hovel prepared for cattle, they at last find refuge, and there the Saviour of the world is born.

313.3 – …. Angels were appointed to carry the glad tidings to those who were prepared to receive it and who would joyfully make it known to the inhabitants of the earth….

314.1-2 – An angel visits the earth to see who are prepared to welcome Jesus. But he can discern no tokens of expectancy. He hears no voice of praise and triumph that the period of Messiah's coming is at hand. The angel hovers for a time over the chosen city and the temple where the divine presence has been manifested for ages; but even here is the same indifference…. There is no evidence that Christ is expected, and no preparation for the Prince of life. In amazement the celestial messenger is about to return to heaven with the shameful tidings, when he discovers a group of shepherds who are watching their flocks by night, and, as they gaze into the starry heavens, are contemplating the prophecy of a Messiah to come to earth, and longing for the advent of the world's Redeemer. Here is a company that is prepared to receive the heavenly message. And suddenly the angel of the Lord appears, declaring the good tidings of great joy. Celestial glory floods all the plain, an innumerable company of angels is revealed, and as if the joy were too great for one messenger to bring from heaven, a multitude of voices break forth in the anthem which all the nations of the saved shall one day sing: *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."* Luke 2:14.

315.1 – Oh, what a lesson is this wonderful story of Bethlehem! How it rebukes our unbelief, our pride and self-sufficiency. How it warns us to beware, lest by our criminal indifference we also fail to discern the signs of the times, and therefore know not the day of our visitation.

315.2 – It was not alone upon the hills of Judea…. that angels found the watchers for Messiah's coming. In the land of the heathen also were those that looked for Him; they were wise men, rich and noble, the philosophers of the East. Students of nature, the Magi had seen God in His handiwork. From the Hebrew Scriptures they had learned of the Star to arise out of Jacob (Numbers 24:17), and with eager desire they awaited His coming… They were seekers for light, and light from the throne of God illumined the path for their feet. While the priests and rabbis of Jerusalem, the appointed guardians and expounders of the truth, were shrouded in darkness, the Heaven-sent star guided these Gentile strangers to the birthplace of the newborn King.

315.3-4 – … the message of the second advent was not committed to the religious leaders of the people. They had failed to preserve their connection with God, and had refused light from heaven… The watchmen upon the walls of Zion should have been the first to catch the tidings of the Saviour's advent, the first to lift their voices to proclaim Him near, the first to warn the people to prepare for His coming. But they were at ease, dreaming of peace and safety, while the people were asleep in their sins. Jesus saw His church, like the barren fig tree, covered with pretentious leaves, yet destitute of precious fruit. There was a boastful observance of the forms of religion, while the spirit of true humility, penitence, and faith – which alone could render the service acceptable to God – was lacking. Instead of the graces of the Spirit there were manifested pride, formalism, vainglory, selfishness, oppression. A backsliding church closed their eyes to the signs of the times. God did not forsake them, or suffer His faithfulness to fail; but they departed from Him, and separated themselves from His love. As they refused to comply with the conditions, His promises were not fulfilled to them.

316.1 – Such is the sure result of neglect to appreciate and improve the light and privileges which God bestows. Unless the church will follow on in His opening providence, accepting every ray of light, performing every duty which may be revealed, religion will inevitably degenerate into the observance of forms, and the spirit of vital godliness will disappear. This truth has been repeatedly illustrated in the history of the church. God requires of His people works of faith and obedience corresponding to the blessings and privileges bestowed. Obedience requires a sacrifice and involves a cross; and this is why so many of the professed followers of Christ refused to receive the light from heaven, and, like the Jews of old, knew not the time of their visitation. Luke 19:44. Because of their pride and unbelief the Lord passed them by and revealed His truth to those who, like the shepherds of Bethlehem and the Eastern Magi, had given heed to all the light they had received.

The above paragraphs are sobering. What is more sobering is that what is described above is not only found in the pages of history, but is a modern reality. What steps do we need to take, both individually and corporately, to guard against the indifference and neglect of the *"religious"* and instead to be like *"the shepherds of Bethlehem and the Eastern Magi."*?

Lesson 16

An American Reformer

(see Chapter 18)

1. Read the following GC paragraphs – Discuss the early life of William Miller:

317.1-2 – An Upright, honest-hearted farmer, who had been led to doubt the divine authority of the Scriptures, yet who sincerely desired to know the truth, was the man specially chosen of God to lead out in the proclamation of Christ's second coming. Like many other reformers, William Miller had in early life battled with poverty and had thus learned the great lessons of energy and self-denial… He had a sound physical constitution, and even in childhood gave evidence of more than ordinary intellectual strength. As he grew older, this became more marked. His mind was active and well developed, and he had a keen thirst for knowledge… He possessed an irreproachable moral character and an enviable reputation, being generally esteemed for integrity, thrift, and benevolence…

318.1 – His mother was a woman of sterling piety, and in childhood, he had been subject to religious impressions. In early manhood, however, he was thrown into the society of deists,

- *Deism: the belief in the existence of a supreme being – a creator – who does not intervene in the universe. The existence of a creator on the basis of reason is accepted but belief in a supernatural deity who interacts with humankind is rejected. The Bible is also denied as divine revelation and it is held that human reason alone is sufficient to establish religion and to enforce morality.*

whose influence was the stronger from the fact that they were mostly good citizens and men of humane and benevolent disposition… By association with these men, Miller was led to adopt their sentiments…. yet his new belief, while setting aside the Bible, offered nothing better to take its place, and he remained far from satisfied. He continued to hold these views, however, for about 12 years. But at the age of 34 the Holy Spirit impressed his heart with a sense of his condition as a sinner. He found in his former belief no assurance of happiness beyond the grave…

What led William Miller away from Scripture?

319.1-2 – In this state he continued for some months. *"Suddenly,"* he says, *"the character of a Saviour was vividly impressed upon my mind. It seemed that there might be a being so good and compassionate as to himself atone for our transgressions, and thereby save us from suffering the penalty of sin. I immediately felt how lovely such a being must be, and imagined that I could cast myself into the arms of, and trust in the mercy of, such a one. But the question arose, how can it be proved that such a being does exist? Aside from the Bible, I found that I could get no evidence of the existence of such a Saviour, or even of a future state…. I saw that the Bible did bring to view just such a Saviour as I needed; and I was perplexed to find how an uninspired book should develop principles so perfectly adapted to the wants of a fallen world. I was constrained to admit that the Scriptures must be a revelation from God. They became my delight; and in Jesus I found a friend. The Saviour became to me the chiefest among ten thousand; and the Scriptures, which before were dark and contradictory, now became the*

lamp to my feet and light to my path. My mind became settled and satisfied. I found the Lord God to be a Rock in the midst of the ocean of life. The Bible now became my chief study, and I can truly say, I searched it with great delight. I found the half was never told me. I wondered why I had not seen its beauty and glory before, and marveled that I could have ever rejected it. I found everything revealed that my heart could desire, and a remedy for every disease of the soul. I lost all taste for other reading, and applied my heart to get wisdom from God."

320.1 – Endeavoring to lay aside all preconceived opinions, and dispensing with commentaries, he compared scripture with scripture by the aid of the marginal references and the concordance. He pursued his study in a regular and methodical manner; beginning with Genesis, and reading verse by verse, he proceeded no faster than the meaning of the several passages so unfolded as to leave him free from all embarrassment. When he found anything obscure, it was his custom to compare it with every other text which seemed to have any reference to the matter under consideration. Every word was permitted to have its proper bearing upon the subject of the text, and if his view of it harmonized with every collateral passage, it ceased to be a difficulty. Thus whenever he met with a passage hard to be understood he found an explanation in some other portion of the Scriptures. As he studied with earnest prayer for divine enlightenment, that which had before appeared dark to his understanding was made clear. He experienced the truth of the psalmist's words*: "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."* Psalm 119:130.

What brough him back to a deep love of Scripture and a desire to study it? What were the results?

2. Read Matthew 24:27, 30-31; 25:31-34; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:50-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 2 Timothy 3:1-5 and the following GC paragraphs. Answer the questions:

320.2 – With intense interest he studied the books of Daniel and the Revelation, employing the same principles of interpretation as in the other scriptures, and found, to his great joy, that the prophetic symbols could be understood. He saw that the prophecies, so far as they had been fulfilled, had been fulfilled literally; that all the various figures, metaphors, parables, similitudes, etc., were either explained in their immediate connection, or the terms in which they were expressed were defined in other scriptures, and when thus explained, were to be literally understood. *"I was thus satisfied,"* he says, *"that the Bible is a system of revealed truths, so clearly and simply given that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein."* Link after link of the chain of truth rewarded his efforts, as step by step he traced down the great lines of prophecy. Angels of heaven were guiding his mind and opening the Scriptures to his understanding.

321.1-2 – Taking the manner in which the prophecies had been fulfilled in the past as a criterion by which to judge of the fulfillment of those which were still future, he became satisfied that the popular view of the spiritual reign of Christ – a temporal millennium before the end of the world – was not sustained by the word of God. This doctrine, pointing to a 1000 years of righteousness and peace before the personal coming of the Lord, put far off the terrors of the day of God. But, pleasing though it may be, it is contrary to the teachings of Christ and His apostles… The doctrine of the world's conversion and the spiritual reign of Christ was not held by the apostolic church. It was not generally accepted by Christians until about the beginning of the 18th century. Like every other error, its results were evil. It taught men to look far in the future for the coming of the Lord and prevented them from giving heed to the signs heralding His approach. It induced a feeling of confidence and security that was not well founded and led many to neglect the preparation necessary in order to meet their Lord.

The belief of 1000 years of peace BEFORE Jesus' 2nd Coming still exists. What are the dangers of such a belief?

321.3 – Miller found the literal, personal coming of Christ to be plainly taught in the Scriptures….

322.1-2 – At His coming the righteous dead will be raised, and the righteous living will be changed…. Not until the personal advent of Christ can His people receive the kingdom….. Man in his present state is mortal, corruptible; but the kingdom of God will be incorruptible, enduring forever. Therefore man in his present state cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But when Jesus comes, He confers immortality upon His people; and then He calls them to inherit the kingdom of which they have hitherto been only heirs.

323.1 – These and other scriptures clearly proved to Miller's mind that the events which were generally expected to take place before the coming of Christ, such as the universal reign of peace and the setting up of the kingdom of God upon the earth, were to be subsequent to the second advent. Furthermore, all the signs of the times and the condition of the world corresponded to the prophetic description of the last days. He was forced to the conclusion, from the study of Scripture alone, that the period allotted for the continuance of the earth in its present state was about to close.

How did a study of Scripture change William Miller's mind regarding the 1000 years of peace?

In his study of Scripture, William Miller came across various chronological periods, which he understood would extend to the 2nd Coming of Jesus. He made it his mission to understand these prophetic periods. With ever increasing interest, he devoted night and day to the study of prophecy.

3. Read Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6; Ezra 7:12-26 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

324.3, 325.1 – The prophecy which seemed most clearly to reveal the time of the 2nd advent was that of Daniel 8:14*: "Unto 2300 days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."* Following his rule of making Scripture its own interpreter, Miller learned that a day in symbolic prophecy represents a year… Miller accepted the generally received view that in the Christian age the earth is the sanctuary, and he therefore understood that the cleansing of the sanctuary foretold in Daniel 8:14 represented the purification of the earth by fire at the second coming of Christ. If, then, the correct starting point could be found for the 2300 days, he concluded that the time of the second advent could be readily ascertained…. (However) In the 8th chapter of Daniel he could find no clue to the starting point of the 2300 days….

What might be the long-term consequences of accepting the *"generally received view"*?

326.1-3 – In Daniel 9:24-25, the angel resumed his explanation: *"70 weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy Holy City.... Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks"*… 70 weeks, representing 490 years, are declared by the angel to be cut off, as specially pertaining to the Jews. But from what were they cut off? As the 2300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, it must be the period from which the 70 weeks were cut off; the 70 weeks must therefore be a part of the 2300 days, and the two periods must begin together… If the date of this commandment could be found, then the starting point for the great period of the 2300 days would be ascertained. In Ezra 7:12-26 the decree is found. In its completest form it was issued by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, 457 B.C….

328.2 – Thus far every specification of the prophecies is strikingly fulfilled, and the beginning of the 70 weeks is fixed beyond question at 457 B.C., and their expiration in A.D. 34. From this data there is no difficulty in finding the termination of the 2300 days. The 70 weeks – 490 days – having been cut off from the 2300, there were 1810 days remaining. After the end of 490 days, the 1810 days were still to be fulfilled. From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. Consequently the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 terminate in 1844. At the expiration of this great prophetic period, upon the testimony of the angel of God, *"the sanctuary shall be cleansed."* Thus, the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary – which was almost universally believed to take place at the second advent – was definitely pointed out.

329.1 – Entering upon the study of the Scriptures as he had done, in order to prove that they were a revelation from God, Miller had not, at the outset, the slightest expectation of reaching the conclusion at which he had now arrived. He himself could hardly credit the results of his investigation. But the Scripture evidence was too clear and forcible to be set aside.

What were William Miller's conclusions?

William Miller studied Scripture for 2 years. In 1818 he was convicted that in 25 years Christ *"would appear for the redemption of His people."* He felt it was his duty to tell others about the light he had received. He expected opposition but was confident all Christians would rejoice in this new hope. His one great fear was that people would accept what he said without examining Scripture for themselves. He did not want to mislead people, so he spent another 5 years in study. At the end of the 5 years, he was fully convinced of the correctness of his position.

4. Read the following GC paragraphs:

330.2 – He began to present his views in private as he had opportunity, praying that some minister might feel their force and devote himself to their promulgation. But he could not banish the conviction that he had a personal duty to perform in giving the warning.... For 9 years he waited, the burden still pressing upon his soul, until in 1831 he for the first time publicly gave the reasons of his faith.

331.1-2 – … With trembling he entered upon his work, leading his hearers down, step by step, through the prophetic periods to the 2nd appearing of Christ. With every effort he gained strength and courage as he saw the widespread interest excited by his words.... He was now 50 years of age, unaccustomed to public speaking, and burdened with a sense of unfitness for the work before him. But from the first his labors were blessed in a remarkable manner to the salvation of souls....

331.3 – In nearly every town there were scores, in some, hundreds, converted as a result of his preaching. In many places Protestant churches of nearly all denominations were thrown open to him, and the invitations to labor usually came from the ministers of the several congregations…. Many who did not accept his views as to the exact time of the 2nd advent were convinced of the certainty and nearness of Christ's coming and their need of preparation. In some of the large cities his work produced a marked impression. Liquor dealers abandoned the traffic and turned their shops into meeting rooms; gambling dens were broken up; infidels, deists, Universalists, and even the most abandoned profligates were reformed, some of whom had not entered a house of worship for years. Prayer meetings were established by the various denominations, in different quarters, at almost every hour, businessmen assembling at midday for prayer and praise... His work, like that of the early Reformers, tended rather to convince the understanding and arouse the conscience than merely to excite the emotions.

332.1 – In 1833 Miller received a license to preach, from the Baptist Church, of which he was a member. A large number of the ministers of his denomination also approved his work, and it was with their formal sanction that he continued his labors. He traveled and preached unceasingly, though his personal labors were confined principally to the New England and Middle States.

What were the initial results of William Miller's ministry?

5. Read Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:13 and the following GC paragraphs:

333.1-2 – In 1833, two years after Miller began to present in public the evidences of Christ's soon coming, the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Saviour as tokens of His second advent…. This prophecy received a striking and impressive fulfillment in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. That was the most extensive and wonderful display of falling stars which has ever been recorded…. *"A more correct picture of a fig tree casting its figs when blown by a mighty wind, it was not possible to behold."*

334.3 – Many who witnessed the falling of the stars, looked upon it as a herald of the coming judgment… Thus the attention of the people was directed to the fulfillment of prophecy, and many were led to give heed to the warning of the 2nd advent.

334.4 – In the year 1840 another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy excited widespread interest. 2 years before, Josiah Litch, one of the leading ministers preaching the 2nd advent, published an exposition of Revelation 9, predicting the fall of the Ottoman Empire. According to his calculations, this power was to be overthrown *"in A.D. 1840, sometime in the month of August;"*---- later he specified the date as the 11th of August, 1840….

335.1 – At the very time specified, Turkey, through her ambassadors, accepted the protection of the allied powers of Europe, and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations…. When it became known, multitudes were convinced of the correctness of the principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates, and a wonderful impetus was given to the advent movement. Men of learning and position united with Miller, both in preaching and in publishing his views, and from 1840 to 1844 the work rapidly extended.

How did the fulfillment of the 2 prophecies provide a boost to William Miller's preaching and the Advent movement in general?

6. Read Genesis 6:1-6; Matthew 24:39 and the following GC paragraphs:

335.2-3 – William Miller possessed strong mental powers, disciplined by thought and study; and he added to these the wisdom of heaven by connecting himself with the Source of wisdom. He was a man of sterling worth, who could not but command respect and esteem wherever integrity of character and moral excellence were valued…. Yet he did not prosecute his work without bitter opposition. As with earlier Reformers, the truths which he presented were not received with favor by popular religious teachers. As these could not maintain their position by the Scriptures, they were driven to resort to the sayings and doctrines of men, to the traditions of the Fathers. …. Time, means, and talents were employed in maligning those whose only offense was that they looked with joy for the return of their Lord and were striving to live holy lives and to exhort others to prepare for His appearing.

336.1 – Earnest were the efforts put forth to draw away the minds of the people from the subject of the 2nd advent. It was made to appear a sin, something of which men should be ashamed, to study the prophecies which relate to the coming of Christ and the end of the world. Thus the popular ministry undermined faith in the word of God….

336.2 – While drawing crowded houses of intelligent and attentive hearers, Miller's name was seldom mentioned by the religious press except by way of ridicule or denunciation…. The gray-headed man who had left a comfortable home to travel at his own expense from city to city, from town to town, toiling unceasingly to bear to the world the solemn warning of the judgment near, was sneeringly denounced as a fanatic, a liar, a speculating knave.

336.4 – The instigator of all evil sought not only to counteract the effect of the advent message, but to destroy the messenger himself…. The opposition manifested by church members toward his message emboldened the baser classes to go to greater lengths; and enemies plotted to take his life as he should leave the place of meeting. But holy angels were in the throng, and one of these, in the form of a man, took the arm of this servant of the Lord and led him in safety from the angry mob. His work was not yet done, and Satan and his emissaries were disappointed in their purpose.

339.1 – As God sent His servant to warn the world of the coming Flood, so He sent chosen messengers to make known the nearness of the final judgment. And as Noah's contemporaries laughed to scorn the predictions of the preacher of righteousness, so in Miller's day many, even of the professed people of God, scoffed at the words of warning.

339.2-3 – … It is those who do not love the Saviour that desire Him to remain away, and there can be no more conclusive evidence that the churches have departed from God than the irritation and animosity excited by this Heaven-sent message.

How did Satan respond to the success of William Miller and the Advent Movement?

What lessons are to be learned from his success?

7. Read Deuteronomy 29:29; Daniel 12:8-10; Matthew 24:15-16; Revelation 1:1-3; 22:10 and the following GC paragraphs:

340.2 – As the arguments from the prophetic periods were found to be impregnable, opposers endeavored to discourage investigation of the subject by teaching that the prophecies were sealed. Thus Protestants followed in the steps of Romanists. While the papal church withholds the Bible from the people, Protestant churches claimed that an important part of the Sacred Word – and that the part which brings to view truths specially applicable to our time – could not be understood.

341.1-3 – Ministers and people declared that the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation were incomprehensible mysteries…. In view of the testimony of Inspiration, how dare men teach that the Revelation is a mystery beyond the reach of human understanding? It is a mystery revealed, a book opened. The study of the Revelation directs the mind to the prophecies of Daniel, and both present most important instruction, given of God to men, concerning events to take place at the close of this world's history.

341.4 – To John were opened scenes of deep and thrilling interest in the experience of the church…. Subjects of vast importance were revealed to him, especially for the last church, that those who should turn from error to truth might be instructed concerning the perils and conflicts before them. None need be in darkness in regard to what is coming upon the earth.

342.1 – Why, then, this widespread ignorance concerning an important part of Holy Writ? Why this general reluctance to investigate its teachings? It is the result of a studied effort of the prince of darkness to conceal from men that which reveals his deceptions. For this reason, Christ the Revelator, foreseeing the warfare that would be waged against the study of the Revelation, pronounced a blessing upon all who should read, hear, and observe the words of the prophecy.

Why is Satan so desperate to keep people from the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation?

Lesson 17

Light Through Darkness

(see chapter 19)

1. Read Amos 3:7; 1 Peter 1:10-12 and the following GC paragraphs:

343.2 – No truth is more clearly taught in the Bible than that God by His Holy Spirit especially directs His servants on earth in the great movements for the carrying forward of the work of salvation. Men are instruments in the hand of God, employed by Him to accomplish His purposes of grace and mercy. Each has his part to act; to each is granted a measure of light, adapted to the necessities of his time, and sufficient to enable him to perform the work which God has given him to do. But no man, however honored of Heaven, has ever attained to a full understanding of the great plan of redemption, or even to a perfect appreciation of the divine purpose in the work for his own time. Men do not fully understand what God would accomplish by the work which He gives them to do; they do not comprehend, in all its bearings, the message which they utter in His name.

344.1 – Even the prophets who were favored with the special illumination of the Spirit did not fully comprehend the import of the revelations committed to them. The meaning was to be unfolded from age to age, as the people of God should need the instruction therein contained.

344.3 – Yet while it was not given to the prophets to understand fully the things revealed to them, they earnestly sought to obtain all the light which God had been pleased to make manifest…. What a lesson to the people of God in the Christian age, for whose benefit these prophecies were given to His servants! …. Witness those holy men of God as they *"inquired and searched diligently"* concerning revelations given them for generations that were yet unborn. Contrast their holy zeal with the listless unconcern with which the favored ones of later ages treat this gift of Heaven. What a rebuke to the ease-loving, world-loving indifference which is content to declare that the prophecies cannot be understood!

What lessons can we learn from those whom God used as revealers of truth, yet who had a limited understanding of His purposes?

2. Read Job 38:1-4; 42:1-3; Isaiah 55:8-9; Daniel 9:23-26 and following GC paragraphs:

344.4 – Though the finite minds of men are inadequate to enter into the counsels of the Infinite One, or to understand fully the working out of His purposes, yet often it is because of some error or neglect on their own part that they so dimly comprehend the messages of Heaven. Not infrequently the minds of the people, and even of God's servants, are so blinded by human opinions, the traditions and false teaching of men, that they are able only partially to grasp the great things which He has revealed in His word. Thus it was with the disciples of Christ, even when the Saviour was with them in person. Their minds had become imbued with the popular

conception of the Messiah as a temporal prince, who was to exalt Israel to the throne of the universal empire, and they could not understand the meaning of His words foretelling His sufferings and death.

345.1-2 – Christ Himself had sent them forth with the message: *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."* Mark 1:15. That message was based on the prophecy of Daniel 9… and with high hopes and joyful anticipations the disciples looked forward to the establishment of Messiah's kingdom at Jerusalem to rule over the whole earth…. From their very birth their hearts had been set upon the anticipated glory of an earthly empire, and this blinded their understanding alike to the specifications of the prophecy and to the words of Christ.

345.3 – They performed their duty in presenting to the Jewish nation the invitation of mercy, and then, at the very time when they expected to see their Lord ascend the throne of David, they beheld Him seized as a malefactor, scourged, derided, and condemned, and lifted up on the cross of Calvary. What despair and anguish wrung the hearts of those disciples during the days while their Lord was sleeping in the tomb!

348.2 – Purposes of infinite mercy were reaching their fulfillment, even through the disappointment of the disciples. While their hearts had been won by the divine grace and power of His teaching, who "spake as never man spake," yet intermingled with the pure gold of their love for Jesus, was the base alloy of worldly pride and selfish ambitions…. Their vision was filled with the throne, the crown, and the glory, while just before them lay the shame and agony of the garden, the judgment hall, the cross of Calvary. It was their pride of heart, their thirst for worldly glory, that had led them to cling so tenaciously to the false teaching of their time, and to pass unheeded the Saviour's words showing the true nature of His kingdom, and pointing forward to His agony and death. And these errors resulted in the trial – sharp but needful – which was permitted for their correction. Though the disciples had mistaken the meaning of their message, and had failed to realize their expectations, yet they had preached the warning given them of God, and the Lord would reward their faith and honor their obedience. To them was to be entrusted the work of heralding to all nations the glorious gospel of their risen Lord. It was to prepare them for this work that the experience which seemed to them so bitter had been permitted.

As finite humans, we have a limited understanding of the things of God. What other factors contribute to our failure to comprehend His messages?

How did those factors derail Jesus' disciples understanding of his mission?

Why did God allow such a bitter experience?

3. Read the following GC paragraphs:

347.2 – The kingdom of grace was instituted immediately after the fall of man, when a plan was devised for the redemption of the guilty race. It then existed in the purpose and by the promise of God; and through faith, men could become its subjects. Yet it was not actually established until the death of Christ. Even after entering upon His earthly mission, the Saviour, wearied with the stubbornness and ingratitude of men, might have drawn back from the sacrifice of Calvary. In Gethsemane the cup of woe trembled in His hand. He might even then have wiped the blood-sweat from His brow and have left the guilty race to perish in their iniquity. Had He done this, there could have been no redemption for fallen men. But when the Saviour yielded up His life, and with His expiring breath cried out, *"It is finished,"* then the fulfillment of the plan of redemption was assured…. The kingdom of grace, which had before existed by the promise of God, was then established.

348.1 – Thus the death of Christ – the very event which the disciples had looked upon as the final destruction of their hope – was that which made it forever sure. While it had brought them a cruel disappointment, it was the climax of proof that their belief had been correct. The event that had filled them with mourning and despair was that which opened the door of hope to every child of Adam, and in which centered the future life and eternal happiness of all God's faithful ones in all the ages.

What does it mean to you personally that Jesus could have, at any moment of his earthly experience, gone back to Heaven and left humanity to perish – YET chose to hang on the cross in order to ensure your salvation?

4. Read Daniel 8:14; Revelation 14:6-9 the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

351.1 – The experience of the disciples who preached the *"gospel of the kingdom"* at the first advent of Christ, had its counterpart in the experience of those who proclaimed the message of His second advent. As the disciples went out preaching, *"The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand,"* so Miller and his associates proclaimed that the longest and last prophetic period brought to view in the Bible was about to expire, that the judgment was at hand, and the everlasting kingdom was to be ushered in….

351.2 – Like the first disciples, William Miller and his associates did not, themselves, fully comprehend the import of the message which they bore. Errors that had been long established in the church prevented them from arriving at a correct interpretation of an important point in the prophecy. Therefore, though they proclaimed the message which God had committed to them to be given to the world, yet through a misapprehension of its meaning they suffered disappointment.

352.1 – In explaining Daniel 8:14, … Miller, as has been stated, adopted the generally received view that the earth is the sanctuary, and he believed that the cleansing of the sanctuary represented the purification of the earth by fire at the coming of the Lord. When, therefore, he found that the close of the 2300 days was definitely foretold, he concluded that this revealed the time of the second advent. His error resulted from accepting the popular view as to what constitutes the sanctuary.

352.3 – Those who proclaimed this warning gave the right message at the right time. But as the early disciples declared, *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand,"* based on the prophecy of Daniel 9, while they failed to perceive that the death of the Messiah was foretold in the same scripture, so Miller and his associates preached the message based on Daniel 8:14 and Revelation 14:7, and failed to see that there were still other messages brought to view in Revelation 14, which were also to be given before the advent of the Lord. As the disciples were mistaken in regard to the kingdom to be set up at the end of the 70 weeks, so Adventists were mistaken in regard to the event to take place at the expiration of the 2300 days. In both cases there was an acceptance of, or rather an adherence to, popular errors that blinded the mind to the truth. Both classes fulfilled the will of God in delivering the message which He desired to be given, and both, through their own misapprehension of their message, suffered disappointment.

How did the experience of those who proclaimed Jesus' 2nd Coming parallel the experience of the disciples?

353.1 – Yet God accomplished His own beneficent purpose in permitting the warning of the judgment to be given just as it was. The great day was at hand, and in His providence the people were brought to the test of a definite time, in order to reveal to them what was in their hearts. The message was designed for the testing and purification of the church. They were to be led to see whether their affections were set upon this world or upon Christ and heaven. They professed to love the Saviour; now they were to prove their love. Were they ready to renounce their worldly hopes and ambitions, and welcome with joy the advent of their Lord? The message was designed to enable them to discern their true spiritual state; it was sent in mercy to arouse them to seek the Lord with repentance and humiliation.

353.2 – The disappointment also, though the result of their own misapprehension of the message which they gave, was to be overruled for good. It would test the hearts of those who had professed to receive the warning. In the face of their disappointment would they rashly give up their experience and cast away their confidence in God's word? or would they, in prayer and humility, seek to discern where they had failed to comprehend the significance of the prophecy? How many had moved from fear, or from impulse and excitement? How many were halfhearted and unbelieving? Multitudes professed to love the appearing of the Lord. When called to endure the scoffs and reproach of the world, and the test of delay and disappointment, would they renounce the faith? Because they did not immediately understand the dealings of God with them, would they cast aside truths sustained by the clearest testimony of His word?

354.1 – This test would reveal the strength of those who with real faith had obeyed what they believed to be the teaching of the word and the Spirit of God. It would teach them, as only such an experience could, the danger of accepting the theories and interpretations of men, instead of making the Bible its own interpreter. To the children of faith the perplexity and sorrow resulting from their error would work the needed correction. They would be led to a closer study of the prophetic word. They would be taught to examine more carefully the foundation of their faith, and to reject everything, however widely accepted by the Christian world, that was not founded upon the Scriptures of truth.

373.2 (ch. 20) – God designed to prove His people. His hand covered a mistake in the reckoning of the prophetic periods. Adventists did not discover the error, nor was it discovered by the most learned of their opponents…

374.1 (ch. 20) – The time of expectation passed, and Christ did not appear for the deliverance of His people. Those who with sincere faith and love had looked for their Saviour, experienced a bitter disappointment. Yet the purposes of God were being accomplished; He was testing the hearts of those who professed to be waiting for His appearing. There were among them many who had been actuated by no higher motive than fear. Their profession of faith had not affected their hearts or their lives. When the expected event failed to take place, these persons declared that they were not disappointed; they had never believed that Christ would come. They were among the first to ridicule the sorrow of the true believers.

Why did God allow the Great Disappointment?

Lesson 18

A Great Religious Awakening

(see chapter 20)

1. Read Daniel 12:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 14:6-7 and the following GC paragraphs:

355.1-2 – A Great religious awakening under the proclamation of Christ's soon coming is foretold in the prophecy of the first angel's message of Revelation 14…. The fact that an angel is said to be the herald of this warning is significant. By the purity, the glory, and the power of the heavenly messenger, divine wisdom has been pleased to represent the exalted character of the work to be accomplished by the message and the power and glory that were to attend it…. (and) give evidence of the rapidity and world-wide extent of the movement.

355.3 – The message itself sheds light as to the time when this movement is to take place. It is declared to be a part of the *"everlasting gospel;"* and it announces the opening of the judgment. The message of salvation has been preached in all ages; but this message is a part of the gospel which could be proclaimed only in the last days, for only then would it be true that the hour of judgment had come. The prophecies present a succession of events leading down to the opening of the judgment. This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal *"to the time of the end."* Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on the fulfillment of these prophecies….

356.1 – The apostle Paul warned the church not to look for the coming of Christ in his day…. Not till after the great apostasy, and the long period of the reign of the *"man of sin,"* can we look for the advent of our Lord. The *"man of sin,"* … represents the papacy, which, as foretold in prophecy, was to maintain its supremacy for 1260 years. This period ended in 1798. The coming of Christ could not take place before that time…. (and) It is this side of that time that the message of Christ's 2nd coming is to be proclaimed.

356.2 – No such message has ever been given in past ages. Paul, as we have seen, did not preach it; he pointed his brethren into the then far-distant future for the coming of the Lord. The Reformers did not proclaim it. Martin Luther placed the judgment about three hundred years in the future from his day. But since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near.

God is a God of order, his timing is perfect and when he says something is going to happen, it happens. How is this truth exhibited in the above passages?

2. Read Zechariah 4:6; Acts 1:8 the following GC paragraphs:

357.1 – Like the great Reformation of the 16th century, the advent movement appeared in different countries of Christendom at the same time. In both Europe and America men of faith and prayer were led to the study of the prophecies, and, tracing down the inspired record, they saw convincing evidence that the end of all things was

at hand. In different lands there were isolated bodies of Christians who, solely by the study of the Scriptures, arrived at the belief that the Saviour's advent was near.

357.2, 360.2 – In 1821, three years after Miller had arrived at his exposition of the prophecies pointing to the time of the judgment, Dr. Joseph Wolff, *"the missionary to the world,"* began to proclaim the Lord's soon coming.... During the 24 years from 1821 to 1845, Wolff traveled extensively: in Africa, visiting Egypt and Abyssinia; in Asia, traversing Palestine, Syria, Persia, Bokhara (Yemen), and India. He also visited the U.S.A....

362.1- 366.2 – A similar belief was found by another missionary to exist in (Northern and Central Asia)... As early as 1826 the advent message began to be preached in England... In South America... In Germany... The light shone also in France and Switzerland... In Scandinavia also the advent message was proclaimed...

368.1 – To William Miller and his colaborers it was given to preach the warning in America. This country became the center of the great advent movement. It was here that the prophecy of the 1st angel's message had its most direct fulfillment. The writings of Miller and his associates were carried to distant lands. Wherever missionaries had penetrated in all the world, were sent the glad tidings of Christ's speedy return....

Discuss the similarities of the Advent movement with those of the early church and the reformation. What is the only explanation for the rapid spread of the Gospel?

3. Read Ezekiel 3:17-18; Matthew 9:37-38; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; 1 Timothy 4:12 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

368.2 – The testimony of the prophecies which seemed to point to the coming of Christ in the spring of 1844 took deep hold of the minds of the people. As the message went from state to state, there was everywhere awakened widespread interest. Many were convinced that the arguments from the prophetic periods were correct, and, sacrificing their pride of opinion, they joyfully received the truth. Some ministers laid aside their sectarian views and feelings, left their salaries and their churches, and united in proclaiming the coming of Jesus. There were comparatively few ministers, however, who would accept this message; therefore it was largely committed to humble laymen. Farmers left their fields, mechanics their tools, traders their merchandise, professional men their positions; and yet the number of workers was small in comparison with the work to be accomplished. The condition of an ungodly church and a world lying in wickedness, burdened the souls of the true watchmen, and they willingly endured toil, privation, and suffering, that they might call men to repentance unto salvation. Though opposed by Satan, the work went steadily forward, and the advent truth was accepted by many thousands.

Who took up the task of spreading the Advent Message and what are the implications for us today?

369.1 – …. Like John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, the preachers laid the ax at the root of the tree and urged all to bring forth fruit meet for repentance. Their stirring appeals were in marked contrast to the assurances of peace and safety that were heard from popular pulpits; and wherever the message was given, it moved the people. The simple, direct testimony of the Scriptures, set home by the power of the Holy Spirit, brought a weight of conviction which few were able wholly to resist. Professors of religion were roused from their false security. They saw their backslidings, their worldliness and unbelief, their pride and selfishness. Many sought the Lord with repentance and humiliation. The affections that had so long clung to earthly things they now fixed upon heaven. The Spirit of God rested upon them, and with hearts softened and subdued they joined to sound the cry: *"Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come."*

369.3 – All classes flocked to the Adventist meetings. Rich and poor, high and low, were, from various causes, anxious to hear for themselves the doctrine of the second advent. The Lord held the spirit of opposition in check while His servants explained the reasons of their faith. Sometimes the instrument was feeble; but the Spirit of God gave power to His truth. The presence of holy angels was felt in these assemblies, and many were daily added to the believers. As the evidences of Christ's soon coming were repeated, vast crowds listened in breathless silence to the solemn words. Heaven and earth seemed to approach each other. The power of God was felt upon old and young and middle-aged. Men sought their homes with praises upon their lips, and the glad sound rang out upon the still night air. None who attended those meetings can ever forget those scenes of deepest interest.

What was the general response?

4. Read Jeremiah 6:13-15; 23:1-2; Matthew 23:15; 24:3, 33, 36, 42-44; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8; 2 Peter 3:3-4; Revelation 3:3 and the following GC paragraphs:

370.1 – The proclamation of a definite time for Christ's coming called forth great opposition from many of all classes, from the minister in the pulpit down to the most reckless, Heaven-daring sinner…. Many who professed to love the Saviour, declared that they had no opposition to the doctrine of the 2nd advent; they merely objected to the definite time. But God's all-seeing eye read their hearts. They did not wish to hear of Christ's coming to judge the world in righteousness. They had been unfaithful servants, their works would not bear the inspection of the heart-searching God, and they feared to meet their Lord…. They not only refused to listen to the plain arguments from the Bible, but ridiculed those who were looking for the Lord. Satan and his angels exulted, and flung the taunt in the face of Christ and holy angels that His professed people had so little love for Him that they did not desire His appearing.

370.2 – *"No man knoweth the day nor the hour"* (Matthew 24:36) was the argument most often brought forward by rejecters of the advent faith…. A clear and harmonious explanation of this text was given by those who were looking for the Lord, and the wrong use made of it by their opponents was clearly shown. The words were spoken by Christ in that memorable conversation with His disciples upon Olivet after He had for the last time departed from the temple. The disciples had asked the question: *"What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"* (Matthew 24:3) Jesus gave them signs, and said: *"When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."* (Matthew 24:33). One saying of the Saviour must not be made to

destroy another. Though no man knoweth the day nor the hour of His coming, we are instructed and required to know when it is near. We are further taught that to disregard His warning, and refuse or neglect to know when His advent is near, will be as fatal for us as it was for those who lived in the days of Noah not to know when the flood was coming….

372.1 – Thus it was shown that Scripture gives no warrant for men to remain in ignorance concerning the nearness of Christ's coming. But those who desired only an excuse to reject the truth closed their ears to this explanation, and the words *"No man knoweth the day nor the hour"* continued to be echoed by the bold scoffer and even by the professed minister of Christ. As the people were roused, and began to inquire the way of salvation, religious teachers stepped in between them and the truth, seeking to quiet their fears by falsely interpreting the word of God. Unfaithful watchmen united in the work of the great deceiver, crying, Peace, peace, when God had not spoken peace. Like the Pharisees in Christ's day, many refused to enter the kingdom of heaven themselves, and those who were entering in they hindered. The blood of these souls will be required at their hand.

372.3 – Many were persecuted by their unbelieving brethren. In order to retain their position in the church, some consented to be silent in regard to their hope; but others felt that loyalty to God forbade them thus to hide the truths which He had committed to their trust. Not a few were cut off from the fellowship of the church for no other reason than expressing their belief in the coming of Christ…

What was the argument of those who rejected the Advent Message? What was their true motivation?

How seriously does God take the position of pastor or church leader?

Lesson 19

A Warning Rejected

(see chapter 21)

According to William Miller's own testimony, he never intended to draw people away from the established churches. His sole purpose in preaching was to *"arouse men to a preparation for the judgment,"* and he made no attempt to convert people to a new religion. He assumed that all Christians would rejoice in the knowledge that Jesus would soon return. The majority of converts remained in their existing churches.

Because his work tended to build up the churches, the leadership tolerated his teachings for a time. However, as ministers and church leadership began to reject Miller's Advent Message, they suppressed all arguments that were in favor of it. This change in attitude brought about a crisis of belief for church members who had accepted the Advent Message.

They loved their churches and were loath to separate from them; but as they saw the testimony of God's word suppressed and their right to investigate the prophecies denied they felt that loyalty to God forbade them to submit…. Hence they felt themselves justified in separating from their former connection. In the summer of 1844 about 50,000 withdrew from the churches.

1. Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5 and the following GC paragraphs:

376.2 – About this time a marked change was apparent in most of the churches throughout the United States. There had been for many years a gradual but steadily increasing conformity to worldly practices and customs, and a corresponding decline in real spiritual life…. While none seemed able to suggest the cause, the fact itself was widely noted and commented upon by both the press and the pulpit.

376.3 – … Pastor Barnes of the Philadelphia Presbyter: *"But now there are no awakenings, no conversions, not much apparent growth in grace in professors, and none come to his study to converse about the salvation of their souls. With the increase of business, and the brightening prospects of commerce and manufacture, there is an increase of worldly-mindedness. Thus it is with all the denominations."*

377.3 – Such a condition never exists without cause in the church itself. The spiritual darkness which falls upon nations, upon churches and individuals, is due, not to an arbitrary withdrawal of the succors of divine grace on the part of God, but to neglect or rejection of divine light on the part of men….

378.1.2 – It suits the policy of Satan that men should retain the forms of religion if but the spirit of vital godliness is lacking…. He who deliberately stifles his convictions of duty because it interferes with his inclinations will finally lose the power to distinguish between truth and error. The understanding becomes darkened, the conscience callous, the heart hardened, and the soul is separated from God. Where the message of divine truth is spurned or slighted, there the church will be enshrouded in darkness; faith and love grow cold, and estrangement and dissension enter. Church members center their interests and energies in worldly pursuits, and sinners become hardened in their impenitence.

What caused the change in attitude within the established churches?

What changes might we need to make individually or corporately in order to avoid the above errors?

According to Mrs. White, the 1st Angel's Message of Revelation 14:6-7 was designed to separate the professed people of God from the corrupting influences of the world and arouse them to their true condition. Had the churches accepted this message and humbled their hearts, the Holy Spirit would have been manifested among them and the church would have experienced the same unity, faith and love that existed in the early church.

2. Read Act 2:46-47; 4:31-32; Ephesians 4:1-6 and the following GC paragraphs.

379.3 – Such were the blessed results experienced by those who accepted the advent message. They came from different denominations, and their denominational barriers were hurled to the ground; conflicting creeds were shivered to atoms; the unscriptural hope of a temporal millennium was abandoned, false views of the second advent were corrected, pride and conformity to the world were swept away; wrongs were made right; hearts were united in the sweetest fellowship, and love and joy reigned supreme. If this doctrine did this for the few who did receive it, it would have done the same for all if all had received it.

380.1 – But the churches generally did not accept the warning. Their ministers…. (who) should have been the first to discern the tokens of Jesus' coming, had failed to learn the truth either from the testimony of the prophets or from the signs of the times. As worldly hopes and ambitions filled the heart, love for God and faith in His word had grown cold; and when the advent doctrine was presented, it only aroused their prejudice and unbelief…. Multitudes, trusting implicitly to their pastors, refused to listen to the warning; and others, though convinced of the truth, dared not confess it, lest they should be *"put out of the synagogue."* The message which God had sent for the testing and purification of the church revealed all too surely how great was the number who had set their affections on this world rather than upon Christ. The ties which bound them to earth were stronger than the attractions heavenward. They chose to listen to the voice of worldly wisdom and turned away from the heart-searching message of truth.

380.2 – In refusing the warning of the first angel, they rejected the means which Heaven had provided for their restoration. They spurned the gracious messenger that would have corrected the evils which separated them from God, and with greater eagerness they turned to seek the friendship of the world. Here was the cause of that fearful condition of worldliness, backsliding, and spiritual death which existed in the churches in 1844.

What were the 2 responses to the 1st Angels Message and what were the results of each response?

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The 1st Angel is followed by a 2nd in Revelation 14:8- *"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries."*

3. Read James 4:4; Revelation 12:1-2, 6; 17:3-6 and the following GC paragraphs:

381.1 – …. The term *"Babylon"* signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate religion…. (in Revelation a woman is a symbol of the church: both the pure church – chapter 12 and the apostate church – chapter 17).

382.2 – The woman of Revelation 17 is described as *"arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness."* … She is *"drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."* … The power that for so many centuries maintained despotic sway over the monarchs of Christendom is Rome. The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome. And no other power could be so truly declared *"drunken with the blood of the saints"* as that church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ….

382.3, 383.1 – Babylon is said to be *"the mother of harlots."* … They are religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt. Since this message follows the warning of the judgment, it must be given in the last days; therefore it cannot refer to the Roman Church alone … and according to Revelation 18:4, the people of God are called upon to come out of Babylon. (Therefore) many of God's people must still be in Babylon. And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the Protestant faith….. all professing to derive their doctrines from the Bible, yet divided into almost innumerable sects, with widely conflicting creeds and theories.

384.5 – What was the origin of the great apostasy? How did the church first depart from the simplicity of the gospel? By conforming to the practices of paganism, to facilitate the acceptance of Christianity by the heathen…. To secure converts, the exalted standard of the Christian faith was lowered, and as the result *"a pagan flood, flowing into the church, carried with it its customs, practices, and idols."* ….

385.1-2 – Has not the same process been repeated in nearly every church calling itself Protestant? …. Alas, to what a fearful extent is that friendship of the world which is "enmity with God," now cherished among the professed followers of Christ! How widely have the popular churches throughout Christendom departed from the Bible standard of humility, self-denial, simplicity, and godliness! ….

386.1 – A profession of religion has become popular with the world. Rulers, politicians, lawyers, doctors, merchants, join the church as a means of securing the respect and confidence of society, and advancing their own worldly interests. Thus they seek to cover all their unrighteous transactions under a profession of Christianity. The various religious bodies, re-enforced by the wealth and influence of these baptized worldlings, make a still higher bid for popularity and patronage. Splendid churches, embellished in the most extravagant manner, are erected on popular avenues. The worshipers array themselves in costly and fashionable attire. A high salary is paid for a talented minister to entertain and attract the people. His sermons must not touch popular sins, but be made smooth and pleasing for fashionable ears. Thus fashionable sinners are enrolled on the church records, and fashionable sins are concealed under a pretense of godliness.

389.1 – …. Were it not that the world is hopelessly intoxicated with the wine of Babylon, multitudes would be convicted and converted by the plain, cutting truths of the word of God. But religious faith appears so confused and discordant that the people know not what to believe as truth. The sin of the world's impenitence lies at the door of the church.

OUCH!! Mrs. White was talking about the problems in modern Christianity, but remember, she wrote the original Great Controversy in 1888. Her writing reflects the reality of the church at that time. Discuss briefly the similarities and differences between the *"Church"* of 1888 and the *"Church"* of 2025.

Love of the world has been the ruin of every Christian Denomination. However, there is an equally ruinous philosophy – that of forced religious conformity, Christian Nationalism and the push to return to the days when church and state were married. Each philosophy resides in the ditch either side of the *"narrow road"* purity of the Gospel Message. How do we make sure that we do not fall into either ditch?

4. Read Revelation 14:8 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

389.2 – …. But the message of the 2nd angel did not reach its complete fulfillment in 1844. The churches then experienced a moral fall, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the advent message; but that fall was not complete. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time they have fallen lower and lower. Not yet, however, can it be said that *"Babylon is fallen, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."* She has not yet made all nations do this. The spirit of world conforming and indifference to the testing truths for our time exists and has been gaining ground in churches of the Protestant faith in all the countries of Christendom; and these churches are included in the solemn and terrible denunciation of the 2nd angel. But the work of apostasy has not yet reached its culmination.

389.3 – The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will *work "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;"* and they that *"received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," will be left to receive "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."* 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete…. the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future.

What evidence tells us that we are quickly approaching the completed work of apostasy in the union of religion and the world?

390.1 – Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion. There are many of these who have never seen the special truths for this time. Not a few are dissatisfied with their present condition and are longing for clearer light. They look in vain for the image of Christ in the churches with which they are connected. As these bodies depart further and further from the truth, and ally themselves more closely with the world, the difference between the two classes will widen, and it will finally result in separation. The time will come when those who love God supremely can no longer remain in connection with such as are *"lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."*

390.2 – Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the 3 Angels Message, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the 2nd angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work. When those that *"believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"* (2 Thessalonians 2:12), shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: *"Come out of her, My people"* (Revelation 18:4).

How do we make sure we are on the side of truth and remain *"out of Babylon"*?

Lesson 20

Prophecies Fulfilled

(see chapter 22)

The spring of 1844 came and went and Jesus did not return. For a season, those who had been faithfully waiting for his return were filled with doubt and uncertainty. The world looked on them as defeated, but they still clung to the Word of God. Bible testimony supported their position and the signs all indicated that Christ's 2nd Coming was near. The believers could not explain their disappointment, but they felt sure that God had been leading them.

1. Read Proverbs 4:23-27; Ezekiel 12:26-28; Habakkuk 2:1-4; Matthew 24:44-51; 25:1-13; Ephesians 4:11-16; and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

393.2 – The parable of the 10 virgins … also illustrates the experience of the Adventist people. In Matthew 24, …. Christ had pointed out some of the most important events in the history of the world and of the church ….. Chapter 25 opens with the words: *"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins."* Here is brought to view the church living in the last days, the same that is pointed out in the close of chapter 24.

393.4 – The coming of Christ, as announced by the 1st angel's message, was … represented by the coming of the bridegroom. The widespread reformation under the proclamation of His soon coming, answered to the going forth of the virgins. In this parable … two classes are represented. All had taken their lamps, the Bible, and by its light had gone forth to meet the Bridegroom. *"the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."* The(y) … had received the grace of God, the regenerating, enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, which renders His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. In the fear of God they had studied the Scriptures to learn the truth, and had earnestly sought for purity of heart and life. These had a personal experience, a faith in God and in His word, which could not be overthrown by disappointment and delay. Others *"took their lamps, and took no oil with them."* They had moved from impulse. Their fears had been excited by the solemn message, but they had depended upon the faith of their brethren, satisfied with the flickering light of good emotions, without a thorough understanding of the truth or a genuine work of grace in the heart. These had gone forth to meet the Lord, full of hope in the prospect of immediate reward; but they were not prepared for delay and disappointment. When trials came, their faith failed, and their lights burned dim.

394.1 – … In this time of uncertainty, the interest of the superficial and halfhearted soon began to waver, and their efforts to relax; but those whose faith was based on a personal knowledge of the Bible had a rock beneath their feet, which the waves of disappointment could not wash away. *"They all slumbered and slept;"* one class in unconcern and abandonment of their faith, the other class patiently waiting till clearer light should be given…. The halfhearted and superficial could no longer lean upon the faith of their brethren. Each must stand or fall for himself.

2 distinct groups of people developed after the 1st Disappointment in the Spring of 1844. What were their characteristics and what can we learn from them?

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Discuss the importance of a personal faith and knowledge of Scripture as a foundation that cannot be moved.

395.2 – …. The people had been greatly stirred by the advent movement, thousands of sinners had been converted, and faithful men were giving themselves to the work of proclaiming the truth, even in the tarrying time. The prince of evil was losing his subjects; and in order to bring reproach upon the cause of God, he sought to deceive some who professed the faith and to drive them to extremes. Then his agents stood ready to seize upon every error, every failure, every unbecoming act, and hold it up before the people in the most exaggerated light, to render Adventists and their faith odious. Thus the greater the number whom he could crowd in to make a profession of faith in the second advent while his power controlled their hearts, the greater advantage would he gain by calling attention to them as representatives of the whole body of believers.

395.3 – Satan is … always active when God is at work for the salvation of souls…. In every revival he is ready to bring in those who are unsanctified in heart and unbalanced in mind. When these have accepted some points of truth, and gained a place with believers, he works through them to introduce theories that will deceive the unwary. No man is proved to be a true Christian because he is found in company with the children of God, even in the house of worship and around the table of the Lord. Satan is frequently there upon the most solemn occasions in the form of those whom he can use as his agents.

396.1 – The prince of evil contests every inch of ground over which God's people advance in their journey toward the heavenly city. In all the history of the church no reformation has been carried forward without encountering serious obstacles…. Thus it was in Paul's day…. Luther also suffered great perplexity and distress from the course of fanatical persons who claimed that God had spoken directly through them…. And the Wesleys, and others who blessed the world by their influence and their faith, encountered at every step the wiles of Satan in pushing overzealous, unbalanced, and unsanctified ones into fanaticism of every grade.

398.1 – … Let the people of God arouse out of sleep and begin in earnest the work of repentance and reformation; let them search the Scriptures to learn the truth as it is in Jesus; let them make an entire consecration to God, and evidence will not be wanting that Satan is still active and vigilant. With all possible deception he will manifest his power, calling to his aid all the fallen angels of his realm.

How did Satan work to further discredit the Advent Movement?

What is the warning for us?

In the summer of 1844, a discovery was made that lifted the spirits of the believers. Artaxerxes' decree for the restoration of Jerusalem went into effect in the autumn of 457 B.C., not in the spring, as previously believed. That meant then, that the 2300 prophetic years also terminated in the autumn of 1844, not the spring.

The Jewish Day of Atonement likewise pointed to the autumn as the termination of the 2300-year prophecy. This yearly event, in which the sanctuary was cleansed, occurred on the 10th day of the 7th Jewish month (Lev. 16:29-34). It was during this ceremony that the sins of the people, which had been *"stored"* in the sanctuary during the year, were atoned for and removed *"cleansing the sanctuary."* At the conclusion of the ceremony, the High Priest came out of the sanctuary and blessed the people.

In 1844 this event occurred on October 22 – that day became the day Jesus would return.

The waiting people of God were, once again, excited. Fanaticism disappeared and believers saw their doubts and perplexities disappear. There was a deep searching of heart, confession of sin, and forsaking of the world. They studied the Word of God with an intensity previously unknown.

It was not the most talented, but the most humble and devoted, who were the first to hear and obey the call. While the churches, in general, rejected the message, there were large groups who received it and withdrew from their congregations.

Like showers of rain upon the thirsty earth, the Spirit of grace descended upon the earnest seekers. Hearts were melted as the Holy Spirit bestowed His blessings upon the faithful, believing ones.

As the time approached the believers felt their need of acceptance with God. They prayed for and with one another. If doubt darkened their minds they did not rest until it was swept away. They longed to see Jesus…..

But again, they were disappointment. The time of expectation passed, and their Saviour did not appear…

2. Read Mark 13:32-37 and the following GC paragraphs:

403.3 – A feeling of awe, a fear that the message might be true, had for a time served as a restraint upon the unbelieving world. After the passing of the time this did not at once disappear; at first they dared not triumph over the disappointed ones; but as no tokens of God's wrath were seen, they recovered from their fears and resumed their reproach and ridicule. A large class who had professed to believe in the Lord's soon coming, renounced their faith. Some who had been very confident were so deeply wounded in their pride that they felt like fleeing from the world. Like Jonah, they complained of God, and chose death rather than life. Those who had based their faith upon the opinions of others, and not upon the word of God, were now as ready again to change their views. The scoffers won the weak and cowardly to their ranks, and all these united in declaring that there could be no more fears or expectations now. The time had passed, the Lord had not come, and the world might remain the same for thousands of years.

404.1 – The earnest, sincere believers had given up all for Christ and had shared His presence as never before. They had, as they believed, given their last warning to the world; and, expecting soon to be received into the society of their divine Master and the heavenly angels, they had, to a great extent, withdrawn from the society of those who did not receive the message. With intense desire they had prayed: "Come, Lord Jesus, and come quickly." But He had not come. And now to take up again the heavy burden of life's cares and perplexities, and to endure the taunts and sneers of a scoffing world, was a terrible trial of faith and patience.

What, then, is the danger in time setting?

3. Read Hebrews 10:35-39; 11:1, 6 and the following GC paragraphs:

405.3 – The world had been looking on, expecting that if the time passed and Christ did not appear, the whole system of Adventism would be given up. But while many, under strong temptation, yielded their faith, there were some who stood firm. The fruits of the advent movement, the spirit of humility and heart searching, of renouncing of the world and reformation of life, which had attended the work, testified that it was of God. They dared not deny that the power of the Holy Spirit had witnessed to the preaching of the second advent, and they could detect no error in their reckoning of the prophetic periods….. They could not consent, without Bible evidence, to renounce positions which had been reached through earnest, prayerful study of the Scriptures, by minds enlightened by the Spirit of God and hearts burning with its living power…

406.1 – … When Jonah proclaimed in the streets of Nineveh that within 40 days the city would be overthrown, the Lord accepted the humiliation of the Ninevites and extended their period of probation; yet the message of Jonah was sent of God, and Nineveh was tested according to His will. Adventists believed that in like manner God had led them to give the warning of the judgment. *"It has,"* they declared, *"tested the hearts of all who heard it, and awakened a love for the Lord's appearing; or it has called forth a hatred, more or less perceivable, but known to God, of His coming…. God thus, as we believe, has tested His people, has tried their faith, has proved them, and seen whether they would shrink, in the hour of trial, from the position in which He might see fit to place them; and whether they would relinquish this world and rely with implicit confidence in the word of God."*

407.1 – God did not forsake His people; His Spirit still abode with those who did not rashly deny the light which they had received….

408.1 – … They had done the will of God in following the guidance of His Spirit and His word; yet they could not understand His purpose in their past experience, nor could they discern the pathway before them, and they were tempted to doubt whether God had indeed been leading them…. As the bright light of the *"midnight cry"* had shone upon their pathway, and they had seen the prophecies unsealed and the rapidly fulfilling signs telling that the coming of Christ was near, they had walked, as it were, by sight. But now, bowed down by disappointed hopes, they could stand only by faith in God and in His word. The scoffing world were saying: *"You have been deceived. Give up your faith, and say that the advent movement was of Satan."* … To renounce their faith now, and deny the power of the Holy Spirit which had attended the message, would be drawing back toward perdition…. Their only safe course was to cherish the light which they had already received of God, hold fast to His promises, and continue to search the Scriptures, and patiently wait and watch to receive further light.

After the Great Disappointment, how did God's people respond and on what did they lean during this trying time?

The Investigative Judgment

Lesson 21

The Sanctuary and Holy of Holies

(see chapter 23 & 24)

In the 1800's the Christian world believed that the earth, or some portion of it, was the sanctuary. They also understood that the cleansing of the sanctuary (earth) was to be accomplished by fire. This event would occur at the 2nd Coming of Christ, which Adventists now believed would happen in the autumn of 1844.

October 22, 1844 came and went but the Lord did not come. Believers knew the Word of God was to be trusted, so their interpretation of prophecy must be the problem, but where was the mistake? While many rejected the Advent Movement, declaring that nothing had happened on October 22, others chose to maintain their faith in the clear evidence of God's work. With earnest prayer they studied Scripture to discover their mistake. As they could see no error in their calculations, they were led to examine the subject of the sanctuary.

In their investigation they learned that there is no Scripture evidence sustaining the popular view that the earth is the sanctuary; but they found in the Bible a full explanation of the subject of the sanctuary……

1. Read Exodus 25:8-9; Hebrews 8:1-6; 9:1-7, 24-28; Revelation 4:5; 8:3; 11:19 and the following GC paragraphs:

411.2 – The sanctuary to which Paul refers was the tabernacle built by Moses at the command of God as the earthly dwelling place of the Most High…. Besides the outer court, which contained the altar of burnt offering, the tabernacle itself consisted of two apartments called the holy and the most holy place, separated by a rich and beautiful curtain, or veil; a similar veil closed the entrance to the first apartment.

412.1 – In the holy place was the candlestick, on the south, with its seven lamps giving light to the sanctuary both by day and by night; on the north stood the table of shewbread; and before the veil separating the holy from the most holy was the golden altar of incense, from which the cloud of fragrance, with the prayers of Israel, was daily ascending before God.

412.2 – In the most holy place stood the ark, a chest of precious wood overlaid with gold, the depository of the 2 tables of stone upon which God had inscribed the law of 10 Commandments. Above the ark, and forming the cover was the mercy seat, … surmounted by two cherubim, one at each end, and all wrought of solid gold. In this apartment the divine presence was manifested in the cloud of glory between the cherubim.

412.3-4, 414.1 – After the settlement of the Hebrews in Canaan, the tabernacle was replaced by the temple of Solomon, which, though a permanent structure and upon a larger scale, observed the same proportions, and was similarly furnished. In this form the sanctuary existed – except while it lay in ruins in Daniel's time – until its destruction by the Romans, in A.D. 70…. this is the only sanctuary that ever existed on the earth, of which the Bible gives any information….. The sanctuary in heaven, in which Jesus ministers in our behalf, is the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy…..

What is the significance of the discovery that the earthly Sanctuary was made after the pattern of the Sanctuary in Heaven?

By 1844 the Temple in Jerusalem had lain in ruins for nearly 1800 years, yet, the prophecy says, *"After 2,300 days, the sanctuary will be cleansed."* Which Sanctuary is Daniel talking about? If there is no longer an earthly sanctuary, than there is only one answer; the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 is pointing to the Sanctuary in Heaven.

2. Read Leviticus 16:3-16, 21-22, 29-30; Isaiah 53:12; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 5:1-6, 8-9 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

418.1-2 – The ministration of the earthly sanctuary consisted of two divisions; the priests ministered daily in the holy place, while once a year the high priest performed a special work of atonement in the most holy, for the cleansing of the sanctuary…. The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner, whose guilt the victim bore, was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, *"transferred"* to the sanctuary. In some cases … the flesh was to be eaten by the priest as a symbol that they *"bore the iniquity of the congregation."* (Leviticus 10:17) …. Such was the work that went on, day by day, throughout the year. The sins of Israel were thus transferred to the sanctuary, and a special work became necessary for their removal…..

419.1 – Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary…..

420.1 – …. By the offering of blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come; but he was not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law. On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering from the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood of this offering, and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, directly over the law, to make satisfaction for its claims. Then, as *"mediator"* he took the sins upon himself and bore them from the sanctuary. Placing his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, he confessed over him all these sins, thus *"transferring"* them from himself to the goat. The goat then bore them away, and they were regarded as forever separated from the people…..

420.2-3 – …. What was done in type in the ministration of the earthly sanctuary is done in reality in the ministration of the heavenly sanctuary….. The ministration of the priest throughout the year in the first apartment of the sanctuary …. represents the work of ministration upon which Christ entered at His ascension.

421.2 – … The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record….. so, before Christ's work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2300 days ended. At that time, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work – to cleanse the sanctuary.

Why does the Heavenly Sanctuary need to be cleansed?

Those who followed in the light of the prophetic word saw that, instead of coming to the earth at the end of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ, instead, entered the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement.

3. Read Daniel 8:14 and Revelation 14:7 and the following GC paragraphs:

423.1 – The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God's hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people. …. They had expected Him to appear in glory to give reward to His servants. As their hopes were disappointed, they had lost sight of Jesus… Now in the holy of holies they again beheld Him, their compassionate High Priest, soon to appear as their king and deliverer. Light from the sanctuary illumined the past, the present, and the future. They knew that God had led them by His unerring providence. Though, like the first disciples, they themselves had failed to understand the message which they bore, yet it had been in every respect correct. In proclaiming it they had fulfilled the purpose of God, and their labor had not been in vain in the Lord. Begotten *"again unto a lively hope,"* they rejoiced *"with joy unspeakable and full of glory."*

424.1 – Both the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 and the first angel's message of Revelation 14:7, pointed to Christ's ministration in the most holy place and to the investigative judgment, not to the coming of Christ for the redemption of His people and the destruction of the wicked. The mistake had not been in the reckoning of the prophetic periods, but in the event to take place at the end of the 2300 days. Through this error the believers had suffered disappointment, yet all that was foretold by the prophecy, and all that they had any Scripture warrant to expect, had been accomplished. At the very time when they were lamenting the failure of their hopes, the event had taken place which was foretold by the message, and which must be fulfilled before the Lord could appear to give reward to His servants.

Discuss how the study of the Sanctuary *"unlocked the mystery"* of the Great Disappointment of 1844?

4. Read Malachi 3:2-4; Matthew 25:1-12; Ephesians 5:25-27; Philippians 2:12-13; Revelation 22:12, 14 and the following GC paragraphs:

421.3 – …. But before this can be accomplished **(the cleansing of the Sanctuary),** there must be an examination of the books to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation – a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him.

424.4 – But the people were not yet ready to meet their Lord. There was still a work of preparation to be accomplished for them. Light was to be given, directing their minds to the temple of God in heaven; and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in His ministration there, new duties would be revealed. Another message of warning and instruction was to be given to the church.

425.1, 2 – … Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they

must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people… When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing….

428.2 – When the work of investigation shall be ended, when the cases of those who in all ages have professed to be followers of Christ have been examined and decided, then, and not till then, probation will close, and the door of mercy will be shut. Thus in the one short sentence, *"They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut,"* we are carried down through the Saviour's final ministration, to the time when the great work for man's salvation shall be completed.

Why must the work of investigation take place before the 2nd Coming of Jesus?

Discuss the work of preparation that must be accomplished in the people of God before Christ's return.

After the Great Disappointment there was, for a period of time, the belief of *"The Shut Door."* This was largely based on Matthew 25:10-12 and Revelation 22:11.

The Adventists wondered if the date which they had determined for the 2nd Coming, was, instead, the beginning of the period that would immediately proceed the 2nd Coming and that probation was now closed. Having given the warning that the judgment was near, they felt their work for the salvation of men was over.

But as they continued to study the Sanctuary, they came to see that, while the 1st work of intercession had concluded in the Holy Place, the 2nd work was now underway in the Most Holy Place. *"There was still an 'open door' to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ was ministering in the sinner's behalf."*

5. Read Hebrews 7:23-26 and the following GC paragraphs:

430.2 – It is those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement who receive the benefits of His mediation in their behalf, while those who reject the light which brings to view this work of ministration are not benefited thereby. The Jews who rejected the light given at Christ's first advent, and refused to believe on Him as the Saviour of the world, could not receive pardon through Him. When Jesus at His ascension entered by His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary to shed upon His disciples the blessings of His mediation (Holy Spirit),

the Jews were left in total darkness to continue their useless sacrifices and offerings. The ministration of types and shadows had ceased. That door **(The Earthly Sanctuary System)** by which men had formerly found access to God was no longer open. The Jews had refused to seek Him in the only way whereby He could then be found, through the ministration in the sanctuary in heaven…. To them the door was shut. They had no knowledge of Christ as the true sacrifice and the only mediator before God; hence they could not receive the benefits of His mediation.

430.3 – The condition of the unbelieving Jews illustrates the condition of the careless and unbelieving among professed Christians, who are willingly ignorant of the work of our merciful High Priest. In the typical service, when the high priest entered the most holy place, all Israel were required to gather about the sanctuary and in the most solemn manner humble their souls before God… How much more essential in this antitypical Day of Atonement that we understand the work of our High Priest and know what duties are required of us.

431.1, 2 – Men cannot with impunity reject the warning which God in mercy sends them. A message was sent from heaven to the world in Noah's day, and their salvation depended upon the manner in which they treated that message. Because they rejected the warning, the Spirit of God was withdrawn from the sinful race, and they perished in the waters of the Flood. In the time of Abraham, mercy ceased to plead with the guilty inhabitants of Sodom, and all but Lot with his wife and two daughters were consumed by the fire sent down from heaven. So in the days of Christ. The Son of God declared to the unbelieving Jews of that generation: *"Your house is left unto you desolate."* Matthew 23:38. Looking down to the last days, the same Infinite Power declares, concerning those who *"received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved"*: *"For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."* 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. As they reject the teachings of His word, God withdraws His Spirit and leaves them to the deceptions which they love…. But Christ still intercedes in man's behalf, and light will be given to those who seek it.

Discuss the importance of understanding and accepting Christ's great work of atonement for us = Life, Death, Resurrection, Holy Place and Most Holy Place Work.

Lesson 22

Facing Life's Record

(see chapter 28)

1. Read Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Isaiah 43:25; Daniel 7:9-10; 12:1; Matthew 12:36-37; Luke 10:20; 1 Corinthians 4:5; James 2:12; 1 Peter 4:17; Revelation 20:12; 21:27 and the following GC paragraphs:

480.1-2 – In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period….

480.3-481.1 – The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God… Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven… every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed … every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ's sake, is recorded.

481.2-482.1 – There is a record also of the sins of men…. Every man's work passes in review before God and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered with terrible exactness every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel.

482.2 – The law of God is the standard by which the characters and the lives of men will be tested in the judgment….

483.1-2 – As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance… All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life…

Discuss the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment:

- Who are under investigation?
- What is being reviewed?
- How thorough is the investigation?
- What is the outcome?

2. Read Isaiah 49:13-16; Jeremiah 31:34; Zechariah 3:1-5; and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

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

What is Jesus' plea?

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484.1 – While Jesus is pleading for the subjects of His grace, Satan accuses them before God as transgressors. The great deceiver has sought to lead them into skepticism, to cause them to lose confidence in God, to separate themselves from His love, and to break His law. Now he points to the record of their lives, to the defects of character, the unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer, to all the sins that he has tempted them to commit, and because of these he claims them as his subjects.

484.2 – Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying: I know them by name…. Christ will clothe His faithful ones with His own righteousness, that He may present them to His Father *"a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."* Eph. 5:27. Their names stand enrolled in the book of life, and concerning them it is written: *"They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy."* Rev. 3:4.

485.1 – Thus will be realized the complete fulfillment of the new-covenant promise: *"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."* ….

What evidence does Satan present against us?

How does Jesus respond?

3. Read Leviticus 16:20-22; Daniel 7:9-14 and the following GC paragraphs:

485.2 – The work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the 2nd advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated…. When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be.

485.3 – In the typical service the high priest, having made the atonement for Israel, came forth and blessed the congregation…. As the priest, in removing the sins from the sanctuary, confessed them upon the head of the scapegoat, so Christ will place all these sins upon Satan, the originator and instigator of sin. The scapegoat, bearing the sins of Israel, was sent away *"unto a land not inhabited";* so Satan, bearing the guilt of all the sins which he has caused God's people to commit, will be for a 1000 years confined to the earth, which will then be desolate, without inhabitant, and he will at last suffer the full penalty of sin in the fires that shall destroy all the wicked. Thus the great plan of redemption will reach its accomplishment in the final eradication of sin and the deliverance of all who have been willing to renounce evil.

486.1 – At the time appointed for the judgment – the close of the 2300 days, in 1844 – began the work of investigation and blotting out of sins. All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are to be judged *"out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."*

When did the Investigative Judgment begin?

What will happen at its conclusion?

Why must the Investigative Judgment occur prior to Jesus' 2nd Coming?

Who will be held responsible for the guilt of the sins of the righteous?

4. Read Matthew 25:32-46; Luke 12:1-3 and the following GC paragraphs:

486.2 – Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God. He may have committed his evil deeds in the light of day or in the darkness of night; but they were open and manifest before Him with whom we have to do. Angels of God witnessed each sin and registered it in the unerring records. Sin may be concealed, denied, covered up from father, mother, wife, children, and associates; no one but the guilty actors may cherish the least suspicion of the wrong; but it is laid bare before the intelligences of heaven…. God has an exact record of every unjust account and every unfair dealing. He is not deceived by appearances of piety. He makes no mistakes in His estimation of character. Men may be deceived by those who are corrupt in heart, but God pierces all disguises and reads the inner life.

486.3 – How solemn is the thought! Day after day, passing into eternity, bears its burden of records for the books of heaven. Words once spoken, deeds once done, can never be recalled. Angels have registered both the good and the evil. The mightiest conqueror upon the earth cannot call back the record of even a single day. Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny for weal or woe. Though they may be forgotten by us, they will bear their testimony to justify or condemn.

487.1 – ….. Could the veil which separates the visible from the invisible world be swept back, and the children of men behold an angel recording every word and deed, which they must meet again in the judgment, how many words that are daily uttered would remain unspoken, how many deeds would remain undone.

487.2 – In the judgment the use made of every talent will be scrutinized. How have we employed the capital lent us of Heaven? Will the Lord at His coming receive His own with usury? Have we improved the powers entrusted us, in hand and heart and brain, to the glory of God and the blessing of the world? How have we used our time, our pen, our voice, our money, our influence? What have we done for Christ, in the person of the poor, the afflicted, the orphan, or the widow? God has made us the depositaries of His holy word; what have we done with the light and truth given us to make men wise unto salvation? No value is attached to a mere profession of faith in Christ; only the love which is shown by works is counted genuine. Yet it is love alone which in the sight of Heaven makes any act of value. Whatever is done from love, however small it may appear in the estimation of men, is accepted and rewarded of God.

487.3 – The hidden selfishness of men stands revealed in the books of heaven. There is the record of unfulfilled duties to their fellow men, of forgetfulness of the Saviour's claims. There they will see how often were given to Satan the time, thought, and strength that belonged to Christ. Sad is the record which angels bear to heaven. Intelligent beings, professed followers of Christ, are absorbed in the acquirement of worldly possessions or the enjoyment of earthly pleasures. Money, time, and strength are sacrificed for display and self-indulgence; but few are the moments devoted to prayer, to the searching of the Scriptures, to humiliation of soul and confession of sin.

How would our conduct be different were we always conscious of the judgment scenes?

5. Read the following GC paragraphs:

488.1-2 – Satan invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds, that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted…. Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour's mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the word of truth. The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days.

488.3 – All who have received the light upon these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them.

489.1 – The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven… There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption. The salvation of man is accomplished at an infinite expense to heaven; the sacrifice made is equal to the broadest demands of the broken law of God. Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, and through His mediation the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God.

Why is it essential that we understand the subject of the Sanctuary and the Investigative judgment?

6. Read Matthew 24:37-39; Mark 13:33-36; Revelation 3:3 and the following GC paragraphs:

489.3 – We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

490.1-2 – … For many years this work has been in progress. Soon – none know how soon – it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review… When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven.

491.1 – The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state--men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above. Before the Flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life and mocked the warnings of impending judgment…. Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men.

Discuss your thoughts on the above section.

Lesson 23

God's Law Immutable

(see chapter 25)

1. Read Psalm 111:7-8; 119:89; Matthew 5:18 and the following GC paragraphs:

433.2 – The ark in the tabernacle on earth contained the two tables of stone, upon which were inscribed the precepts of the law of God. The ark was merely a receptacle for the tables of the law, and the presence of these divine precepts gave to it its value and sacredness. When the temple of God was opened in heaven, the ark of His testament was seen. Within the holy of holies, in the sanctuary in heaven, the divine law is sacredly enshrined – the law that was spoken by God Himself amid the thunders of Sinai and written with His own finger on the tables of stone.

434.1 – The law of God in the sanctuary in heaven is the great original, of which the precepts inscribed upon the tables of stone and recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch were an unerring transcript. Those who arrived at an understanding of this important point were thus led to see the sacred, unchanging character of the divine law.

What does it mean and why is it important that God's law is *"sacredly enshrined"* in Heaven?

2. Read Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Psalm 95:1-7a; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Isaiah 40:25-26; 45:18; Ezekiel 11:19-20; 20:20; Romans 2:13-16; Revelation 4:9-11; 14:7, 12 and the following GC paragraphs:

434.2-3 – In the very bosom of the Decalogue is the 4th commandment…. The Spirit of God impressed the hearts of those students of His word. The conviction was urged upon them that they had ignorantly transgressed this precept by disregarding the Creator's rest day. They began to examine the reasons for observing the 1st day of the week instead of the day which God had sanctified. They could find no evidence in the Scriptures that the 4th commandment had been abolished, or that the Sabbath had been changed; the blessing which first hallowed the 7th day had never been removed. They had been honestly seeking to know and to do God's will; now, as they saw themselves transgressors of His law, sorrow filled their hearts, and they manifested their loyalty to God by keeping His Sabbath holy.

437.1 – …. *"The importance of the Sabbath as the memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God"* – because He is the Creator, and we are His creatures. "*The Sabbath therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship, for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten."* – J. N. Andrews, History of the Sabbath, chapter 27. It was to keep this truth ever before the minds of men, that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden; and so long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue

as its sign and memorial. Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man's thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God.

What will be the central characteristic of God's people before Christ's 2nd Coming?

Why is keeping the 7th day Sabbath a sign of loyalty?

The 3rd angel points to another class, against whose errors a solemn and fearful warning is uttered: *"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God."* (Revelation 14:9, 10). A correct interpretation of the symbols employed is necessary to an understanding of this message.

3. Read Revelation 12:9 and the following GC paragraph:

438.2 – It was he that moved upon Herod to put the Saviour to death. But the chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and His people during the first centuries of the Christian Era was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion. Thus while the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome.

- The Dragon is:

Read Daniel 7:8, 16-25; Revelation 13:1-10 and the following GC paragraph:

439.1, 2 – This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman empire….. This prophecy (Revelation 13:1-10), which is nearly identical with the description of the little horn of Daniel 7, unquestionably points to the papacy…… The 42 months (13:5) are the same as the *"time and times and the dividing of time,"* 3 ½ years or 1260 days, of Daniel 7 ….. This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the papacy, A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798. At that time the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound…

- The Sea Beast is:

Read Daniel 7:2; Revelation 13:11-18; 17:15 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

- Waters symbolize:

- Winds symbolize:

439.3 – Both the appearance of this beast and the manner of its rise indicate that the nation which it represents is unlike those presented under the preceding symbols. The great kingdoms that have ruled the world were presented to the prophet Daniel as beasts of prey…

440.1 – The beast with lamblike horns was seen *"coming up out of the earth."* Instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, the nation thus represented must arise in territory previously unoccupied and grow up gradually and peacefully. It could not, then, arise among the crowded and struggling nationalities of the Old World – that turbulent sea of *"peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."* It must be sought in the Western Continent.

440.2 – What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America….

441.1 – *"And he had two horns like a lamb."* The lamblike horns indicate youth, innocence, and gentleness, fitly representing the character of the United States when presented to the prophet as *"coming up"* in 1798. Among the Christian exiles who first fled to America and sought an asylum from royal oppression and priestly intolerance were many who determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty. Their views found place in the Declaration of Independence, which sets forth the great truth that *"all men are created equal"* and endowed with the inalienable right to *"life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."* And the Constitution guarantees to the people the right of self-government, providing that representatives elected by the popular vote shall enact and administer the laws. Freedom of religious faith was also granted, every man being permitted to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Republicanism and Protestantism became the fundamental principles of the nation. These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity. The oppressed and downtrodden throughout Christendom have turned to this land with interest and hope. Millions have sought its shores, and the United States has risen to a place among the most powerful nations of the earth.

- The Earth Beast is:

442.1 – The lamblike horns and dragon voice of the symbol point to a striking contradiction between the professions and the practice of the nation thus represented. The *"speaking"* of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities. By such action it will give the lie to those liberal and peaceful principles which it has put forth as the foundation of its policy. The prediction that it will speak *"as a dragon"* and exercise "*all the power of the first beast"* plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the dragon and the leopardlike (sea) beast. And the statement that the beast with two horns *"causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast"* indicates that the authority of this nation is to be exercised in enforcing some observance which shall be an act of homage to the papacy.

442.2 – Such action would be directly contrary to the principles of this government, to the genius of its free institutions, to the direct and solemn avowals of the Declaration of Independence, and to the Constitution. The founders of the nation wisely sought to guard against the employment of secular power on the part of the church, with its inevitable result – intolerance and persecution. The Constitution provides that *"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,"* and that *"no*

religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under the United States." Only in flagrant violation of these safeguards to the nation's liberty, can any religious observance be enforced by civil authority. But the inconsistency of such action is no greater than is represented in the symbol. It is the beast with lamblike horns – in profession pure, gentle, and harmless – that speaks as a dragon.

What is the striking difference between the profession of the Earth Beast and how it speaks?

What are the implications as to the role of the United States at the end of time?

4. Read 2 Thess. 2:3-4; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Revelation 13:14-15 and the following GC paragraphs:

443.2 – When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel and accepting heathen rites and customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God; and in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of *"heresy."* In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends.

443.3 – Whenever the church has obtained secular power, she has employed it to punish dissent from her doctrines….. An example of this is given in the long-continued persecution of dissenters by the Church of England. During the 16th and 17th centuries, thousands of nonconformist ministers were forced to flee from their churches, and many, both of pastors and people, were subjected to fine, imprisonment, torture, and martyrdom.

443.4 – It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government, and this prepared the way for the development of the papacy – the beast…. So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast.

444.1 – The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord there will exist a state of religious decline similar to that in the first centuries…. When this state of ungodliness shall be reached, the same results will follow as in the first centuries.

445.1 – When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result.

What led the early church to seek the support of secular power?

How did she use that power?

What conditions in modern churches will produce similar results?

The Image of the Beast is: Apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas.

5. Read Isaiah 58:13-14; Mark 2:27-28; Revelation 13:16-18; 14:9-12; 15:2-3 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

445.3 – Since those who keep God's commandments are thus placed in contrast with those that worship the beast and his image and receive his mark, it follows that the keeping of God's law, on the one hand, and its violation, on the other, will make the distinction between the worshipers of God and the worshipers of the beast.

446.1-2 – The special characteristic of the beast, and therefore of his image, is the breaking of God's commandments…. Only by changing God's law could the papacy exalt itself above God; whoever should understandingly keep the law as thus changed would be giving supreme honor to that power by which the change was made. Such an act of obedience to papal laws would be a mark of allegiance to the pope in the place of God…... An intentional, deliberate change is presented: *"He shall think to change the times and the law."* (Daniel 7:25) The change in the 4th commandment exactly fulfills the prophecy. For this the only authority claimed is that of the church. Here the papal power openly sets itself above God.

446.3 – While the worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the 4th commandment – the worshipers of the beast will be distinguished by their efforts to tear down the Creator's memorial, to exalt the institution of Rome….

What is the special characteristic of the *"beast"*?

What law, in particular, was the target of *"intentional and deliberate change"*?

447.2 – It is a fact generally admitted by Protestants that the Scriptures give no authority for the change of the Sabbath….

448.2 – The Roman Church has not relinquished her claim to supremacy; and when the world and the Protestant churches accept a sabbath of her creating, while they reject the Bible Sabbath, they virtually admit this assumption. They may claim the authority of tradition and of the Fathers for the change; but in so doing they ignore the very principle which separates them from Rome – that *"the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants."* …. As the movement for Sunday enforcement gains favor, he rejoices, feeling assured that it will eventually bring the whole Protestant world under the banner of Rome.

448.3 – …. The enforcement of Sunday keeping on the part of Protestant churches is an enforcement of the worship of the papacy – of the beast…. But in the very act of enforcing a religious duty by secular power, the churches would themselves form an image to the beast; hence the enforcement of Sunday keeping in the United States would be an enforcement of the worship of the beast and his image.

449.1 – But Christians of past generations observed the Sunday, supposing that in so doing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath; and there are now true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before Him. But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will…. be worshipping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome – *"the mark of the beast."* NOT UNTIL the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive *"the mark of the beast."*

450.1 – … All Christendom will be divided into two great classes – those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel *"all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond"* to receive *"the mark of the beast,"* yet the people of God will not receive it.

Discuss the *"Mark of the Beast."* What is it? Under what circumstances will men receive it?

Lesson 24

A Work of Reform

(see Chapter 26)

1. Read Genesis 2:1-3; Isaiah 56:1-8; 58:1-2, 12-14 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

451.1-2 – The work of Sabbath reform to be accomplished in the last days is foretold in the prophecy of Isaiah 56 … Here is foreshadowed the gathering in of the Gentiles by the gospel. And upon those who then honor the Sabbath, a blessing is pronounced. Thus the obligation of the 4th commandment extends past the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, to the time when His servants should preach to all nations the message of glad tidings.

452.1 – …. The seal of God's law is found in the 4th commandment. This only, of all the 10 commandments, brings to view both the name and the title of the Lawgiver. It declares Him to be the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and thus shows His claim to reverence and worship above all others. Aside from this precept, there is nothing in the Decalogue to show by whose authority the law is given. When the Sabbath was changed by the papal power, the seal was taken from the law. The disciples of Jesus are called upon to restore it by exalting the Sabbath of the 4th commandment to its rightful position as the Creator's memorial and the sign of His authority.

What is so special about the 4th Commandment?

452.2 – … While conflicting doctrines and theories abound, the law of God is the one unerring rule by which all opinions, doctrines, and theories are to be tested….

452.3-4 – It is not the wicked world, but those whom the Lord designates as *"my people,"* that are to be reproved for their transgressions…. In Isaiah 58:1-2, 12-14 is brought to view a class who think themselves righteous and appear to manifest great interest in the service of God; but the stern and solemn rebuke of the Searcher of hearts proves them to be trampling upon the divine precepts….. This prophecy also applies in our time. The breach was made in the law of God when the Sabbath was changed by the Roman power. But the time has come for that divine institution to be restored. The breach is to be repaired and the foundation of many generations to be raised up.

How do we *"repair the breach"* in the law created by the observance of Sunday?

454.1 – Those who received the light concerning the sanctuary and the immutability of the law of God were filled with joy and wonder as they saw the beauty and harmony of the system of truth that opened to their understanding. They desired that the light which appeared to them so precious might be imparted to all Christians; and they could not but believe that it would be joyfully accepted. But truths that would place them at variance with the world were not welcome to many who claimed to be followers of Christ. Obedience to the 4th commandment required a sacrifice from which the majority drew back.

454.2 – As the claims of the Sabbath were presented, many reasoned from the worldling's standpoint. Said they: *"We have always kept Sunday, our fathers kept it, and many good and pious men have died happy while keeping it. If they were right, so are we. The keeping of this new Sabbath would throw us out of harmony with the world, and we would have no influence over them. What can a little company keeping the seventh day hope to accomplish against all the world who are keeping Sunday?"* ….

454.3 – …. Against this argument it was shown that the Sabbath and its observance were more ancient and widespread, even as old as the world itself, and bearing the sanction both of angels and of God.… Well may this institution demand our reverence; it was ordained by no human authority and rests upon no human traditions; it was established by the Ancient of Days and commanded by His eternal word.

455.1-2 – As the attention of the people was called to the subject of Sabbath reform, popular ministers perverted the word of God, placing such interpretations upon its testimony as would best quiet inquiring minds. And those who did not search the Scriptures for themselves were content to accept conclusions that were in accordance with their desires. By argument, sophistry, the traditions of the Fathers, and the authority of the church, many endeavored to overthrow the truth. Its advocates were driven to their Bibles to defend the validity of the 4th commandment. Humble men, armed with the word of truth alone, withstood the attacks of men of learning, who, with surprise and anger, found their eloquent sophistry…. powerless against the simple, straightforward reasoning of men who were versed in the Scriptures rather than in the subtleties of the schools.

What was the general response among Christians when presented with the truth surrounding the 4th commandment?

What were the arguments for and against Sabbath observance?

2. Read Matthew 24:36-50; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3; 2 Peter 3:8-18 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

456.1 – The majority of Adventists rejected the truths concerning the sanctuary and the law of God, and many also renounced their faith in the advent movement and adopted unsound and conflicting views of the prophecies which applied to that work. Some were led into the error of repeatedly fixing upon a definite time for the coming of Christ. The light which was now shining on the subject of the sanctuary should have shown them that no prophetic period extends to the second advent; that the exact time of this advent is not foretold. But, turning from the light, they continued to set time after time for the Lord to come, and as often they were disappointed.

456.2 – The apostle's admonition to the Thessalonians contains an important lesson for those who live in the last days. Many Adventists have felt that unless they could fix their faith upon a definite time for the Lord's coming, they could not be zealous and diligent in the work of preparation. But as their hopes are again and again excited, only to be destroyed, their faith receives such a shock that it becomes well-nigh impossible for them to be impressed by the great truths of prophecy.

457.1 – The preaching of a definite time for the judgment, in the giving of the 1st message, was ordered by God. The computation of the prophetic periods on which that message was based, placing the close of the 2300 days in the autumn of 1844, stands without impeachment. The repeated efforts to find new dates for the beginning and close of the prophetic periods, and the unsound reasoning necessary to sustain these positions, not only lead minds away from the present truth, but throw contempt upon all efforts to explain the prophecies. The more frequently a definite time is set for the second advent, and the more widely it is taught, the better it suits the purposes of Satan. After the time has passed, he excites ridicule and contempt of its advocates, and thus casts reproach upon the great advent movement of 1843 and 1844. Those who persist in this error will at last fix upon a date too far in the future for the coming of Christ. Thus they will be led to rest in a false security, and many will not be undeceived until it is too late.

Discuss the factors that led to the practice of time setting?

How does time setting align with the purposes of Satan?

457.2 – The history of ancient Israel is a striking illustration of the past experience of the Adventist body. God led His people in the advent movement, even as He led the children of Israel from Egypt. In the great disappointment their faith was tested as was that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had they still trusted to the guiding hand that had been with them in their past experience, they would have seen the salvation of God. If all

who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844, had received the 3rd angel's message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.

458.1 – It was not the will of God that Israel should wander 40 years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But *"they could not enter in because of unbelief."* Hebrews 3:19. Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land. In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out.

Discuss

4. Read Isaiah 51:7-8; 58:1; Ezekiel 33:7-9; John 3:19-20; 2 Corinthians 4:1-18; Hebrews 11:32-12:2 and the following GC paragraphs:

458.2 – Now as in former ages, the presentation of a truth that reproves the sins and errors of the times will excite opposition…. As men see that they cannot maintain their position by the Scriptures, many determine to maintain it at all hazards, and with a malicious spirit they assail the character and motives of those who stand in defense of unpopular truth. It is the same policy which has been pursued in all ages. Elijah was declared to be a troubler in Israel, Jeremiah a traitor, Paul a polluter of the temple. From that day to this, those who would be loyal to truth have been denounced as seditious, heretical, or schismatic. Multitudes who are too unbelieving to accept the sure word of prophecy will receive with unquestioning credulity an accusation against those who dare to reprove fashionable sins. This spirit will increase more and more. And the Bible plainly teaches that a time is approaching when the laws of the state will so conflict with the law of God that whosoever would obey all the divine precepts must brave reproach and punishment as an evildoer.

459.1, 3 – In view of this, what is the duty of the messenger of truth? Shall he conclude that the truth ought not to be presented, since often its only effect is to arouse men to evade or resist its claims? No; he has no more reason for withholding the testimony of God's word, because it excites opposition, than had earlier Reformers. The confession of faith made by saints and martyrs was recorded for the benefit of succeeding generations. Those living examples of holiness and steadfast integrity have come down to inspire courage in those who are now called to stand as witnesses for God. They received grace and truth, not for themselves alone, but that, through them, the knowledge of God might enlighten the earth. Has God given light to His servants in this generation? Then they should let it shine forth to the world…. So far as his opportunities extend, everyone who has received the light of truth is under the same solemn and fearful responsibility….

460.1 – The great obstacle both to the acceptance and to the promulgation of truth is the fact that it involves inconvenience and reproach…. But this does not deter the true followers of Christ. These do not wait for truth to become popular. Being convinced of their duty, they deliberately accept the cross….

460.2 – Whatever may be their profession, it is only those who are world servers at heart that act from policy rather than principle in religious things. We should choose the right because it is right, and leave consequences with God. To men of principle, faith, and daring, the world is indebted for its great reforms. By such men the work of reform for this time must be carried forward.

Considering the above, discuss the question, *"what is the duty of the messenger of truth?"*

Lesson 25

Modern Revivals

(see chapter 27)

1. Read 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; Galatians 5:22-25 and the following GC paragraphs:

461.1 – Wherever the word of God has been faithfully preached, results have followed that attested its divine origin. The Spirit of God accompanied the message of His servants, and the word was with power. Sinners felt their consciences quickened….. Deep conviction took hold upon their minds and hearts. They were convinced of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come. They had a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and felt the terror of appearing, in their guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts…. As the cross of Calvary, with its infinite sacrifice for the sins of men, was revealed, they saw that nothing but the merits of Christ could suffice to atone for their transgressions; this alone could reconcile man to God. With faith and humility they accepted the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world….

461.2 – These souls brought forth fruit meet for repentance. They believed and were baptized, and rose to walk in newness of life – new creatures in Christ Jesus; not to fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God to follow in His steps, to reflect His character, and to purify themselves even as He is pure. The things they once hated they now loved, and the things they once loved they hated. The proud and self-assertive became meek and lowly of heart. The vain and supercilious became serious and unobtrusive. The profane became reverent, the drunken sober, and the profligate pure. The vain fashions of the world were laid aside….

462.1 – Revivals brought deep heart-searching and humility. They were characterized by solemn, earnest appeals to the sinner, by yearning compassion for the purchase of the blood of Christ. Men and women prayed and wrestled with God for the salvation of souls. The fruits of such revivals were seen in souls who shrank not at self-denial and sacrifice, but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer reproach and trial for the sake of Christ. Men beheld a transformation in the lives of those who had professed the name of Jesus. The community was benefited by their influence. They gathered with Christ, and sowed to the Spirit, to reap life everlasting.

462.3 – This is the result of the work of the Spirit of God. There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation….

What is the evidence of true revival/conversion?

2. Read Jeremiah 14:14-16; 23:23-32; Matthew 7:15-29; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1-6 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

463.1 – But many of the revivals of modern times have presented a marked contrast to those manifestations of divine grace which in earlier days followed the labors of God's servants. It is true that a widespread interest is kindled, many profess conversion, and there are large accessions to the churches; nevertheless the results are not such as to warrant the belief that there has been a corresponding increase of real spiritual life….

463.2 – Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by gratifying the love for what is new and startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to Bible truth, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them. A message which appeals to unimpassioned reason awakens no response. The plain warnings of God's word, relating directly to their eternal interests, are unheeded.

463.3 – With every truly converted soul the relation to God and to eternal things will be the great topic of life. But where, in the popular churches of today, is the spirit of consecration to God? The converts do not renounce their pride and love of the world. They are no more willing to deny self, to take up the cross, and follow the meek and lowly Jesus, than before their conversion. Religion has become the sport of infidels and skeptics because so many who bear its name are ignorant of its principles. The power of godliness has well-nigh departed from many of the churches. Picnics, church theatricals, church fairs, fine houses, personal display, have banished thoughts of God. Lands and goods and worldly occupations engross the mind, and things of eternal interest receive hardly a passing notice.

464.1a – Notwithstanding the widespread declension of faith and piety, there are true followers of Christ in these churches. Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word….

Compare *"popular revivals"* with genuine spiritual conversion.

464.1b – The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.

464.2 – In many of the revivals which have occurred during the last half century, the same influences have been at work, to a greater or less degree, that will be manifest in the more extensive movements of the future. There is an emotional excitement, a mingling of the true with the false, that is well adapted to mislead. Yet none need

be deceived. In the light of God's word it is not difficult to determine the nature of these movements. Wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God's blessing is not bestowed….

465.1a – In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. It is a neglect of these truths that has opened the door to the evils which are now becoming so widespread in the religious world.

What is Satan's counterfeit work and what is our only safeguard against it?

3. Read Psalm 19:7-10; 40:8; 119:43-47; 97-105; Matthew 5:17-19; 22:36-40; James 1:22-25 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

465.1b – The nature and the importance of the law of God have been, to a great extent, lost sight of. A wrong conception of the character, the perpetuity, and the obligation of the divine law has led to errors in relation to conversion and sanctification, and has resulted in lowering the standard of piety in the church. Here is to be found the secret of the lack of the Spirit and power of God in the revivals of our time.

465.2 – … Edwards A. Park, in setting forth the current religious perils, ably says: *"One source of danger is the neglect of the pulpit to enforce the divine law. In former days the pulpit was an echo of the voice of conscience*"…. They repeated the two great maxims, that the law is a transcript of the divine perfections, and that a man who does not love the law does not love the gospel; for the law, as well as the gospel, is a mirror reflecting the true character of God. This peril leads to another, that of underrating the evil of sin… In proportion to the rightfulness of the commandment is the wrongfulness of disobeying it….

465.3 – *"Affiliated to the dangers already named is the danger of* ***underestimating the justice of God****. The tendency of the modern pulpit is to strain out the divine justice from the divine benevolence, to sink benevolence into a sentiment rather than exalt it into a principle….. men easily slide into the habit of underestimating the grace which has provided an atonement for sin."* Thus the gospel loses its value and importance in the minds of men, and soon they are ready practically to cast aside the Bible itself.

What are some of the popular yet dangerous claims of modern religion?

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What is the inevitable result?

466.1 – Many religious teachers assert that Christ by His death abolished the law, and men are henceforth free from its requirements. There are some who represent it as a grievous yoke, and in contrast to the bondage of the law they present the liberty to be enjoyed under the gospel.

466.3 – The claim that Christ by His death abolished His Father's law is without foundation. Had it been possible for the law to be changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died to save man from the penalty of sin. The death of Christ, so far from abolishing the law, proves that it is immutable…..

467.1 – The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man…. The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law…. Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.

How do we know that the law is unchangeable?

4. Read John 16:13; 17:17; Romans 8:1-4, 7; 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Peter 1:5-10 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

467.2 – It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart. But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God's law…. But *"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son,"* that man might be reconciled to God. Through the merits of Christ he can be restored to harmony with his Maker. His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth, without which, says Jesus, *"he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

What is the purpose of conversion and transformation (sanctification)?

467.3 – The first step in reconciliation to God is the conviction of sin…. In order to see his guilt, the sinner must test his character by God's great standard of righteousness. It is a mirror which shows the perfection of a righteous character and enables him to discern the defects in his own.

467.4 – The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. While it promises life to the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor. The gospel of Christ alone can free him from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed; and faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice. Thus he obtains *"remission of sins that are past"* and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is a child of God, having received the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries: *"Abba, Father!"*

468.1-2 – In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with God, as it is brought into accord with His law. When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. The old life of alienation from God has ended; the new life of reconciliation, of faith and love, has begun…. Without the law, men have no just conception of the purity and holiness of God or of their own guilt and uncleanness. They have no true conviction of sin and feel no need of repentance. Not seeing their lost condition as violators of God's law, they do not realize their need of the atoning blood of Christ. The hope of salvation is accepted without a radical change of heart or reformation of life. Thus superficial conversions abound, and multitudes are joined to the church who have never been united to Christ.

What are the steps of reconciliation?

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Why is the law important?

469.1 – Erroneous theories of sanctification, also, springing from neglect or rejection of the divine law, have a prominent place in the religious movements of the day. These theories are both false in doctrine and dangerous in practical results; and the fact that they are so generally finding favor, renders it doubly essential that all have a clear understanding of what the Scriptures teach upon this point.

469.2 – True sanctification is a Bible doctrine…. The Bible clearly teaches what sanctification is and how it is to be attained…. Since the law of God is *"holy, and just, and good,"* a transcript of the divine perfection, it follows that a character formed by obedience to that law will be holy… The followers of Christ are to become like Him--by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification.

What is Biblical Sanctification?

469.3 – This work can be accomplished only through faith in Christ, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God…. The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, but he will maintain a constant warfare against it. Here is where Christ's help is needed. Human weakness becomes united to divine strength….

470.1 – The Scriptures plainly show that the work of sanctification is progressive. When in conversion the sinner finds peace with God through the blood of the atonement, the Christian life has but just begun. Now he is to *"go on unto perfection;"* to grow up *"unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."*

470.2 – Those who experience the sanctification of the Bible will manifest a spirit of humility. Like Moses, they have had a view of the awful majesty of holiness, and they see their own unworthiness in contrast with the purity and exalted perfection of the Infinite One.

471.2 – There can be no self-exaltation, no boastful claim to freedom from sin, on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary's cross. They feel that it was their sin which caused the agony that broke the heart of the Son of God, and this thought will lead them to self-abasement. Those who live nearest to Jesus discern most clearly the frailty and sinfulness of humanity, and their only hope is in the merit of a crucified and risen Saviour.

471.3 – The sanctification now gaining prominence in the religious world carries with it a spirit of self-exaltation and a disregard for the law of God that mark it as foreign to the religion of the Bible. Its advocates teach that sanctification is an instantaneous work, by which, through faith alone, they attain to perfect holiness. *"Only believe,"* say they, *"and the blessing is yours."* No further effort on the part of the receiver is supposed to be required. At the same time they deny the authority of the law of God, urging that they are released from obligation to keep the commandments. But is it possible for men to be holy, in accord with the will and character of God, without coming into harmony with the principles which are an expression of His nature and will, and which show what is well pleasing to Him?

Discuss how Sanctification occurs in the life of a believer.

How does worldly sanctification differ from Biblical Sanctification? Why do some find it more appealing?

5. Read Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 11:1-10; James 2:14-24; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 John 2:4-5; 3:6 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

472.1 – The desire for an easy religion that requires no striving, no self-denial, no divorce from the follies of the world, has made the doctrine of faith, and faith only, a popular doctrine…

472.2 – The testimony of the word of God is against this ensnaring doctrine of faith without works. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions upon which mercy is to be granted, it is presumption; for genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.

472.3 – Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God's requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the

soul from God… Here is the test of every man's profession. We cannot accord holiness to any man without bringing him to the measurement of God's only standard of holiness in heaven and in earth. If men feel no weight of the moral law, if they belittle and make light of God's precepts, if they break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, they shall be of no esteem in the sight of Heaven, and we may know that their claims are without foundation.

Discuss the importance of faith and works in the Christian life.

473.1 – And the claim to be without sin is, in itself, evidence that he who makes this claim is far from holy. It is because he has no true conception of the infinite purity and holiness of God or of what they must become who shall be in harmony with His character; because he has no true conception of the purity and exalted loveliness of Jesus, and the malignity and evil of sin, that man can regard himself as holy. The greater the distance between himself and Christ, and the more inadequate his conceptions of the divine character and requirements, the more righteous he appears in his own eyes.

473.2 – The sanctification set forth in the Scriptures embraces the entire being – spirit, soul, and body…. So Christians are bidden to present their bodies, "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." In order to do this, all their powers must be preserved in the best possible condition. Every practice that weakens physical or mental strength unfits man for the service of his Creator. And will God be pleased with anything less than the best we can offer? Said Christ*: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."* Those who do love God with all the heart will desire to give Him the best service of their life, and they will be constantly seeking to bring every power of their being into harmony with the laws that will promote their ability to do His will. They will not, by the indulgence of appetite or passion, enfeeble or defile the offering which they present to their heavenly Father.

474.2 – Notwithstanding these inspired declarations, how many professed Christians are enfeebling their powers in the pursuit of gain or the worship of fashion; how many are debasing their godlike manhood by gluttony, by wine drinking, by forbidden pleasure. And the church, instead of rebuking, too often encourages the evil by appealing to appetite, to desire for gain or love of pleasure, to replenish her treasury, which love for Christ is too feeble to supply. Were Jesus to enter the churches of today and behold the feasting and unholy traffic there conducted in the name of religion, would He not drive out those desecrators, as He banished the money-changers from the temple?

475.1 – He whose body is the temple of the Holy Spirit will not be enslaved by a pernicious habit. His powers belong to Christ, who has bought him with the price of blood. His property is the Lord's. How could he be guiltless in squandering this entrusted capital? Professed Christians yearly expend an immense sum upon useless and pernicious indulgences, while souls are perishing for the word of life. God is robbed in tithes and offerings, while they consume upon the altar of destroying lust more than they give to relieve the poor or for the support of the gospel. If all who profess to be followers of Christ were truly sanctified, their means, instead of being spent for needless and even hurtful indulgences, would be turned into the Lord's treasury, and Christians would set an example of temperance, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. Then they would be the light of the world.

475.2 – In the light of God's word we are justified in declaring that sanctification cannot be genuine which does not work this utter renunciation of the sinful pursuits and gratifications of the world.

Discuss the all-encompassing nature of Sanctification.

6. Read John 10:10; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 3:16-19; Philippians 4:4-7; Colossians 1:9-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; 1 John 5:4 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

475.3 – To those who comply with the conditions, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean," God's promise is, "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18. It is the privilege and the duty of every Christian to have a rich and abundant experience in the things of God…. Every step of faith and obedience brings the soul into closer connection with the Light of the world, in whom there "is no darkness at all." The bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon the servants of God, and they are to reflect His rays. As the stars tell us that there is a great light in heaven with whose glory they are made bright, so Christians are to make it manifest that there is a God on the throne of the universe whose character is worthy of praise and imitation. The graces of His Spirit, the purity and holiness of His character, will be manifest in His witnesses.

477.1 – Here are revealed the heights of attainment that we may reach through faith in the promises of our heavenly Father, when we fulfill His requirements. Through the merits of Christ we have access to the throne of Infinite Power.

What heights may be reached by the Christian?

477.2 – While the Christian's life will be characterized by humility, it should not be marked with sadness and self-depreciation. It is the privilege of everyone so to live that God will approve and bless him. It is not the will of our heavenly Father that we should be ever under condemnation and darkness. There is no evidence of true humility in going with the head bowed down and the heart filled with thoughts of self. We may go to Jesus and be cleansed, and stand before the law without shame and remorse.

477.3 – Through Jesus the fallen sons of Adam become *"sons of God."* The Christian's life should be one of faith, of victory, and joy in God.

Discuss the roll of joy in the Christian life and the promises and experiences that will make his life cheerful.

478.1 – Such are the fruits of Bible conversion and sanctification; and it is because the great principles of righteousness set forth in the law of God are so indifferently regarded by the Christian world that these fruits are so rarely witnessed. This is why there is manifest so little of that deep, abiding work of the Spirit of God which marked revivals in former years.

478.2 – It is by beholding that we become changed. And as those sacred precepts in which God has opened to men the perfection and holiness of His character are neglected, and the minds of the people are attracted to human teachings and theories, what marvel that there has followed a decline of living piety in the church….

478.3 – …. It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among His professed people….

Why are the fruits of Sanctification so seldom seen?

Deceptions of Satan

Lesson 26

Agency of Evil Spirits

(see chapter 31)

1. Read Genesis 3:23-24; 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 32:21; Job 38:7; Psalm 8:5; 103:19-21; Isaiah 6:1-8; Ezekiel 1:14; Daniel 7:10; Matthew 28:3-4; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 5:11 and the following GC paragraphs:

511.1 – The connection of the visible with the invisible world, the ministration of angels of God, and the agency of evil spirits, are plainly revealed in the Scriptures, and inseparably interwoven with human history. There is a growing tendency to disbelief in the existence of evil spirits, while the holy angels … are regarded by many as spirits of the dead. But the Scriptures not only teach the existence of angels, both good and evil, but present unquestionable proof that these are not disembodied spirits of dead men.

511.3 – We are informed in Scripture as to the number, and the power and glory, of the heavenly beings, of their connection with the government of God, and also of their relation to the work of redemption.

What is the Biblical evidence for the existence of angels?

Discuss their characteristics.

2. Read Job 1:9-10; Psalm 34:7; Matthew 18:10 and the following GC paragraphs:

512.1 – Angels are sent on missions of mercy to the children of God. To Abraham, with promises of blessing; to the gates of Sodom, to rescue righteous Lot from its fiery doom; to Elijah, as he was about to perish from weariness and hunger in the desert; to Elisha, with chariots and horses of fire surrounding the little town where he was shut in by his foes; to Daniel, while seeking divine wisdom in the court of a heathen king, or abandoned to become the lions' prey; to Peter, doomed to death in Herod's dungeon; to the prisoners at Philippi; to Paul and his companions in the night of tempest on the sea; to open the mind of Cornelius to receive the gospel; to dispatch Peter with the message of salvation to the Gentile stranger--thus holy angels have, in all ages, ministered to God's people.

512.2 – A guardian angel is appointed to every follower of Christ. These heavenly watchers shield the righteous from the power of the wicked one…. The angels appointed to minister to the children of God have at all times access to His presence.

513.1 – Thus God's people, exposed to the deceptive power and unsleeping malice of the prince of darkness, and in conflict with all the forces of evil, are assured of the unceasing guardianship of heavenly angels. Nor is such assurance given without need. If God has granted to His children promise of grace and protection, it is because there are mighty agencies of evil to be met – agencies numerous, determined, and untiring, of whose malignity and power none can safely be ignorant or unheeding.

What is the ministry of guardian angels?

Why is such protection needed by the children of God?

3. Read Revelation 12:9 and the following GC paragraph:

513.2 – Evil spirits, in the beginning created sinless, were equal in nature, power, and glory with the holy beings that are now God's messengers. But fallen through sin, they are leagued together for the dishonor of God and the destruction of men. United with Satan in his rebellion, and with him cast out from heaven, they have, through all succeeding ages, co-operated with him in his warfare against the divine authority. We are told in Scripture of their confederacy and government, of their various orders, of their intelligence and subtlety, and of their malicious designs against the peace and happiness of men.

What is the origin of the evil spirits, or angels?

4. Read Deuteronomy 32:16-17; Psalm 106:37; Matthew 12:22; Mark 1:34; 9:17-27; Luke 8:27-39; Acts 13:8-12; 16:16-18; 19:13-16 and the following GC paragraphs:

513.3 – Old Testament history presents occasional mention of their existence and agency; but it was during the time when Christ was upon the earth that evil spirits manifested their power in the most striking manner. Christ

had come to enter upon the plan devised for man's redemption, and Satan determined to assert his right to control the world. He had succeeded in establishing idolatry in every part of the earth except the land of Palestine. To the only land that had not fully yielded to the tempter's sway, Christ came to shed upon the people the light of heaven. Here two rival powers claimed supremacy. Jesus was stretching out His arms of love, inviting all who would to find pardon and peace in Him. The hosts of darkness saw that they did not possess unlimited control, and they understood that if Christ's mission should be successful, their rule was soon to end. Satan raged like a chained lion and defiantly exhibited his power over the bodies as well as the souls of men.

514.1 – The fact that men have been possessed with demons, is clearly stated in the New Testament. The persons thus afflicted were not merely suffering with disease from natural causes. Christ had perfect understanding of that with which He was dealing, and He recognized the direct presence and agency of evil spirits.

514.2 – A striking example of their number, power, and malignity, and also of the power and mercy of Christ, is given in the Scripture account of the healing of the demoniacs at Gadara. Those wretched maniacs, spurning all restraint, writhing, foaming, raging, were filling the air with their cries, doing violence to themselves, and endangering all who should approach them. Their bleeding and disfigured bodies and distracted minds presented a spectacle well pleasing to the prince of darkness. One of the demons controlling the sufferers declared: *"My name is Legion: for we are many."* Mark 5:9. In the Roman army a legion consisted of from 3,000 to 5,000 men. Satan's hosts also are marshaled in companies, and the single company to which these demons belonged numbered no less than a legion.

514.3 – At the command of Jesus the evil spirits departed from their victims, leaving them calmly sitting at the Saviour's feet, subdued, intelligent, and gentle. But the demons were permitted to sweep a herd of swine into the sea; and to the dwellers of Gadara the loss of these outweighed the blessings which Christ had bestowed, and the divine Healer was entreated to depart….

515.1 – …. Furthermore, this event was permitted to take place that the disciples might witness the cruel power of Satan upon both man and beast. The Saviour desired His followers to have a knowledge of the foe whom they were to meet, that they might not be deceived and overcome by his devices….

516.1 – Those possessed with devils are usually represented as being in a condition of great suffering; yet there were exceptions to this rule. For the sake of obtaining supernatural power, some welcomed the satanic influence. These of course had no conflict with the demons. Of this class were those who possessed the spirit of divination…

Why does God want us to understand the type of foe we are facing?

5. Read Job 1:7; Romans 1:28-32; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Peter 5:8 and the following GC paragraphs:

516.2 – None are in greater danger from the influence of evil spirits than those who, notwithstanding the direct and ample testimony of the Scriptures, deny the existence and agency of the devil and his angels. So long as we are ignorant of their wiles, they have almost inconceivable advantage; many give heed to their suggestions while

they suppose themselves to be following the dictates of their own wisdom. This is why, as we approach the close of time, when Satan is to work with greatest power to deceive and destroy, he spreads everywhere the belief that he does not exist. It is his policy to conceal himself and his manner of working.

Who are in the greatest danger from the influence of Satan and evil spirits?

516.3 – There is nothing that the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices. The better to disguise his real character and purposes, he has caused himself to be so represented as to excite no stronger emotion than ridicule or contempt. He is well pleased to be painted as a ludicrous or loathsome object, misshapen, half animal and half human. He is pleased to hear his name used in sport and mockery by those who think themselves intelligent and well informed.

517.1 – It is because he has masked himself with consummate skill that the question is so widely asked: "*Does such a being really exist?*" It is an evidence of his success that theories giving the lie to the plainest testimony of the Scriptures are so generally received in the religious world. And it is because Satan can most readily control the minds of those who are unconscious of his influence, that the word of God gives us so many examples of his malignant work, unveiling before us his secret forces, and thus placing us on our guard against his assaults.

517.2 – The power and malice of Satan and his host might justly alarm us were it not that we may find shelter and deliverance in the superior power of our Redeemer. We carefully secure our houses with bolts and locks to protect our property and our lives from evil men; but we seldom think of the evil angels who are constantly seeking access to us, and against whose attacks we have, in our own strength, no method of defense. If permitted, they can distract our minds, disorder and torment our bodies, destroy our possessions and our lives. Their only delight is in misery and destruction. Fearful is the condition of those who resist the divine claims and yield to Satan's temptations, until God gives them up to the control of evil spirits….

What does Satan fear the most?

…But those who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people.

Lesson 27

Snares of Satan

(see chapter 32)

1. Read the following GC paragraphs:

518.1 – The great controversy between Christ and Satan, that has been carried forward for nearly six thousand years, is soon to close; and the wicked one redoubles his efforts to defeat the work of Christ in man's behalf and to fasten souls in his snares. To hold the people in darkness and impenitence till the Saviour's mediation is ended, and there is no longer a sacrifice for sin, is the object which he seeks to accomplish.

518.2 – When there is no special effort made to resist his power, when indifference prevails in the church and the world, Satan is not concerned; for he is in no danger of losing those whom he is leading captive at his will. But when the attention is called to eternal things, and souls are inquiring, *"What must I do to be saved?"* he is on the ground, seeking to match his power against the power of Christ and to counteract the influence of the Holy Spirit.

What is Satan's objective in the closing moments of earth's history?

What is the thing that concerns him most and how does he respond?

2. Read the following GC paragraphs:

518.3 – The Scriptures declare that upon one occasion, when the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them (Job 1:6), not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further his own malicious designs against the righteous. With the same object he is in attendance when men assemble for the worship of God. Though hidden from sight, he is working with all diligence to control the minds of the worshipers. Like a skillful general he lays his plans beforehand. As he sees the messenger of God searching the Scriptures, he takes note of the subject to be presented to the people. Then he employs all his cunning and shrewdness so to control circumstances that the message may not reach those whom he is deceiving on that very point. The one who most needs the warning will be urged into some business transaction which requires his presence, or will by some other means be prevented from hearing the words that might prove to him a savor of life unto life.

519.1 – Again, Satan sees the Lord's servants burdened because of the spiritual darkness that enshrouds the people. He hears their earnest prayers for divine grace and power to break the spell of indifference,

carelessness, and indolence. Then with renewed zeal he plies his arts. He tempts men to the indulgence of appetite or to some other form of self-gratification, and thus benumbs their sensibilities so that they fail to hear the very things which they most need to learn.

519.2-3 – Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures, will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross the mind. There has ever been a class professing godliness, who, instead of following on to know the truth, make it their religion to seek some fault of character or error of faith in those with whom they do not agree. Such are Satan's right-hand helpers. Accusers of the brethren are not few, and they are always active when God is at work and His servants are rendering Him true homage. They will put a false coloring upon the words and acts of those who love and obey the truth.....

Discuss the tactics Satan uses to control and distract the minds of God's *"people"*?

3. Read Jeremiah 14:14; Ezekiel 22:26-28; 34:1-10; Matthew 7:15-20; Mark 13:22-23; 2 Peter 2:1-3, 12-22 and the following GC paragraphs:

520.1 – The great deceiver has many agents ready to present any and every kind of error to ensnare souls--heresies prepared to suit the varied tastes and capacities of those whom he would ruin. It is his plan to bring into the church insincere, unregenerate elements that will encourage doubt and unbelief, and hinder all who desire to see the work of God advance and to advance with it. Many who have no real faith in God or in His word assent to some principles of truth and pass as Christians, and thus they are enabled to introduce their errors as Scriptural doctrines.

520.2 – The position that it is of no consequence what men believe is one of Satan's most successful deceptions. He knows that the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver; therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel. From the beginning the servants of God have contended against false teachers, not merely as vicious men, but as inculcators of falsehoods that were fatal to the soul. Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, firmly and fearlessly opposed those who were turning men from the word of God. That liberality which regards a correct religious faith as unimportant found no favor with these holy defenders of the truth.

520.3 – The vague and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, and the many conflicting theories concerning religious faith, that are found in the Christian world are the work of our great adversary to confuse minds so that they shall not discern the truth. And the discord and division which exist among the churches of Christendom are in a great measure due to the prevailing custom of wresting the Scriptures to support a favorite theory. Instead of carefully studying God's word with humility of heart to obtain a knowledge of His will, many seek only to discover something odd or original.

521.1 – In order to sustain erroneous doctrines or unchristian practices, some will seize upon passages of Scripture separated from the context, perhaps quoting half of a single verse as proving their point, when the remaining portion would show the meaning to be quite the opposite. With the cunning of the serpent they entrench themselves behind disconnected utterances construed to suit their carnal desires. Thus do many willfully pervert the word of God. Others, who have an active imagination, seize upon the figures and symbols of

Holy Writ, interpret them to suit their fancy, with little regard to the testimony of Scripture as its own interpreter, and then they present their vagaries as the teachings of the Bible.

521.2 – Whenever the study of the Scriptures is entered upon without a prayerful, humble, teachable spirit, the plainest and simplest as well as the most difficult passages will be wrested from their true meaning. The papal leaders select such portions of Scripture as best serve their purpose, interpret to suit themselves, and then present these to the people, while they deny them the privilege of studying the Bible and understanding its sacred truths for themselves. The whole Bible should be given to the people just as it reads. It would be better for them not to have Bible instruction at all than to have the teaching of the Scriptures thus grossly misrepresented.

Discuss the tactics Satan uses to introduce heresies and sustain erroneous doctrines in the church?

How do we guard against this?

4. Read Psalm 25:4-5; 119:105; Habakkuk 2:2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and the following GC paragraphs:

521.3 – The Bible was designed to be a guide to all who wish to become acquainted with the will of their Maker. God gave to men the sure word of prophecy; angels and even Christ Himself came to make known to Daniel and John the things that must shortly come to pass. Those important matters that concern our salvation were not left involved in mystery. They were not revealed in such a way as to perplex and mislead the honest seeker after truth…. The word of God is plain to all who study it with a prayerful heart. Every truly honest soul will come to the light of truth…. And no church can advance in holiness unless its members are earnestly seeking for truth as for hid treasure.

526.2 – God has given in His word sufficient evidence of its divine character. The great truths which concern our redemption are clearly presented. By the aid of the Holy Spirit, which is promised to all who seek it in sincerity, every man may understand these truths for himself. God has granted to men a strong foundation upon which to rest their faith.

528.2 – Satan can present a counterfeit so closely resembling the truth that it deceives those who are willing to be deceived, who desire to shun the self-denial and sacrifice demanded by the truth; but it is impossible for him to hold under his power one soul who honestly desires, at whatever cost, to know the truth…. The Spirit of truth has been sent to guide men into all truth. And upon the authority of the Son of God it is declared: *"Seek, and ye shall find."* Matthew 7:7

How much of Scripture can be understood by those who have an honest desire to know truth?

Discuss:

5. Read Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Cor. 2:14 and the following GC paragraphs:

522.1-2 – … As Satan succeeds in supplanting the Bible by human speculations, the law of God is set aside, and the churches are under the bondage of sin while they claim to be free…. God has permitted a flood of light to be poured upon the world in discoveries in science and art; but even the greatest minds, if not guided by the word of God in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to investigate the relations of science and revelation.

522.3 – Human knowledge of both material and spiritual things is partial and imperfect; therefore many are unable to harmonize their views of science with Scripture statements. Many accept mere theories and speculations as scientific facts, and they think that God's word is to be tested by the teachings of *"what is falsely called knowledge."* 1 Timothy 6:20. The Creator and His works are beyond their comprehension; and because they cannot explain these by natural laws, Bible history is regarded as unreliable. Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments too often go a step further and doubt the existence of God and attribute infinite power to nature. Having let go their anchor, they are left to beat about upon the rocks of infidelity.

522.4 – Thus many err from the faith and are seduced by the devil. Men have endeavored to be wiser than their Creator; human philosophy has attempted to search out and explain mysteries which will never be revealed through the eternal ages. If men would but search and understand what God had made known of Himself and His purposes, they would obtain such a view of the glory, majesty, and power of Jehovah that they would realize their own littleness and would be content with that which has been revealed for themselves and their children.

523.1 – It is a masterpiece of Satan's deceptions to keep the minds of men searching and conjecturing in regard to that which God has not made known and which He does not intend that we shall understand. It was thus that Lucifer lost his place in heaven. He became dissatisfied because all the secrets of God's purposes were not confided to him, and he entirely disregarded that which was revealed concerning his own work in the lofty position assigned him…. Now he seeks to imbue the minds of men with the same spirit and to lead them also to disregard the direct commands of God.

527.1 – Yet the finite minds of men are inadequate fully to comprehend the plans and purposes of the Infinite One. We can never by searching find out God. We must not attempt to lift with presumptuous hand the curtain behind which He veils His majesty…. We can so far comprehend His dealings with us, and the motives by which He is actuated, that we may discern boundless love and mercy united to infinite power. Our Father in heaven orders everything in wisdom and righteousness, and we are not to be dissatisfied and distrustful, but to bow in

reverent submission. He will reveal to us as much of His purposes as it is for our good to know, and beyond that we must trust the Hand that is omnipotent, the Heart that is full of love.

527.2 – While God has given ample evidence for faith, He will never remove all excuse for unbelief. All who look for hooks to hang their doubts upon will find them. And those who refuse to accept and obey God's word until every objection has been removed, and there is no longer an opportunity for doubt, will never come to the light.

Why is human speculation or the attempt to test Scripture by human knowledge so dangerous?

What should our attitude be toward those things God has chosen not to reveal?

6. Read Romans 1:16-25; Thessalonians 2:9-12 and the following GC paragraphs:

523.2 – Those who are unwilling to accept the plain, cutting truths of the Bible are continually seeking for pleasing fables that will quiet the conscience. The less spiritual, self-denying, and humiliating the doctrines presented, the greater the favor with which they are received. These persons degrade the intellectual powers to serve their carnal desires. Too wise in their own conceit to search the Scriptures with contrition of soul and earnest prayer for divine guidance, they have no shield from delusion. Satan is ready to supply the heart's desire, and he palms off his deceptions in the place of truth…. All who neglect the word of God to study convenience and policy, that they may not be at variance with the world, will be left to receive damnable heresy for religious truth. Every conceivable form of error will be accepted by those who willfully reject the truth….. With such a warning before us it behooves us to be on our guard as to what doctrines we receive.

525.3 – Innumerable are the erroneous doctrines and fanciful ideas that are obtaining among the churches of Christendom….Few who venture to do this stop with the rejection of a single truth. The majority continue to set aside one after another of the principles of truth, until they become actual infidels.

What is the danger in setting aside the *"plain cutting truths of the Bible?"*

7. Read Lev. 19:31; Romans 1:25; John 1:1-3, 14; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Phil. 4:6 and the following GC paragraphs:

524.1 – Among the most successful agencies of the great deceiver are the delusive teachings and lying wonders of spiritualism. Disguised as an angel of light, he spreads his nets where least suspected. If men would but study the Book of God with earnest prayer that they might understand it, they would not be left in darkness to receive false doctrines. But as they reject the truth they fall a prey to deception.

524.2 – Another dangerous error is the doctrine that denies the deity of Christ, claiming that He had no existence before His advent to this world. This theory is received with favor by a large class who profess to believe the Bible; yet it directly contradicts the plainest statements of our Saviour concerning His relationship with the Father, His divine character, and His pre-existence.... It not only lowers man's conceptions of the work of redemption, but undermines faith in the Bible as a revelation from God.... If men reject the testimony of the inspired Scriptures concerning the deity of Christ, it is in vain to argue the point with them; for no argument, however conclusive, could convince them.... None who hold this error can have a true conception of the character or the mission of Christ, or of the great plan of God for man's redemption.

525.1 – The teaching so widely echoed from popular pulpits, that the second advent of Christ is His coming to each individual at death, is a device to divert the minds of men from His personal coming in the clouds of heaven. For years Satan has thus been saying, *"Behold, He is in the secret chambers"* (Matthew 24:23-26); and many souls have been lost by accepting this deception.

525.2 – Again, worldly wisdom teaches that prayer is not essential. Men of science claim that there can be no real answer to prayer; that this would be a violation of law, a miracle, and that miracles have no existence. The universe, say they, is governed by fixed laws, and God Himself does nothing contrary to these laws. Thus they represent God as bound by His own laws--as if the operation of divine laws could exclude divine freedom. Such teaching is opposed to the testimony of the Scriptures. Were not miracles wrought by Christ and His apostles? The same compassionate Saviour lives today, and He is as willing to listen to the prayer of faith as when He walked visibly among men. The natural cooperates with the supernatural. It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask.

List five errors and the reasons they are so dangerous.

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8. Read the following GC paragraph:

526.1 – There is nothing that Satan desires more than to destroy confidence in God and in His word. Satan stands at the head of the great army of doubters, and he works to the utmost of his power to beguile souls into his ranks. It is becoming fashionable to doubt. There is a large class by whom the word of God is looked upon with distrust for the same reason as was its Author--because it reproves and condemns sin. Those who are unwilling to obey its requirements endeavor to overthrow its authority. They read the Bible, or listen to its teachings as presented from the sacred desk, merely to find fault with the Scriptures or with the sermon. Not a few become infidels in order to justify or excuse themselves in neglect of duty. Others adopt skeptical principles from pride and indolence. Too ease-loving to distinguish themselves by accomplishing anything worthy of honor, which requires effort and self-denial, they aim to secure a reputation for superior wisdom by criticizing the Bible. There is much which the finite mind, unenlightened by divine wisdom, is powerless to comprehend; and thus they find occasion to criticize. There are many who seem to feel that it is a virtue to stand on the side of unbelief, skepticism, and infidelity. But underneath an appearance of candor it will be found that such persons are actuated by self-confidence and pride. Many delight in finding something in the Scriptures to puzzle the minds of others. Some at first criticize and reason on the wrong side, from a mere love of controversy. They do not realize that they are thus entangling themselves in the snare of the fowler. But having openly expressed unbelief, they feel that they must maintain their position. Thus they unite with the ungodly and close to themselves the gates of Paradise.

What are the 4 attitudes among Christians that can lead to infidelity?

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9. Read Psalm 9:10; 40:4; 43:3; Proverbs 3:5-6; Isaiah 12:2-6; John 3:21; Hebrews 11:1, 6; James 1:5-6 and the following GC paragraphs:

527.3 – Distrust of God is the natural outgrowth of the unrenewed heart, which is at enmity with Him. But faith is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and it will flourish only as it is cherished. No man can become strong in faith without a determined effort. Unbelief strengthens as it is encouraged; and if men, instead of dwelling upon the evidences which God has given to sustain their faith, permit themselves to question and cavil, they will find their doubts constantly becoming more confirmed.

528.1 – There is but one course for those to pursue who honestly desire to be freed from doubts. Instead of questioning and caviling concerning that which they do not understand, let them give heed to the light which already shines upon them, and they will receive greater light. Let them do every duty which has been made plain to their understanding, and they will be enabled to understand and perform those of which they are now in doubt.

What is root cause of distrust and doubt and what happens if it is fed?

How does faith flourish?

10. Read the following GC paragraphs:

528.3 – The followers of Christ know little of the plots which Satan and his hosts are forming against them. But He who sitteth in the heavens will overrule all these devices for the accomplishment of His deep designs. The Lord permits His people to be subjected to the fiery ordeal of temptation, not because He takes pleasure in their distress and affliction, but because this process is essential to their final victory. He could not, consistently with His own glory, shield them from temptation; for the very object of the trial is to prepare them to resist all the allurements of evil.

529.1 – Neither wicked men nor devils can hinder the work of God, or shut out His presence from His people, if they will, with subdued, contrite hearts, confess and put away their sins, and in faith claim His promises. Every temptation, every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted…

530.1 – Satan is well aware that the weakest soul who abides in Christ is more than a match for the hosts of darkness, and that, should he reveal himself openly, he would be met and resisted. Therefore he seeks to draw away the soldiers of the cross from their strong fortification, while he lies in ambush with his forces, ready to destroy all who venture upon his ground. Only in humble reliance upon God, and obedience to all His commandments, can we be secure.

Why does God not shield His people from Satan's temptations?

How do we successfully overcome temptation?

Lesson 28

The 1st Great Deception

(see chapter 33)

1. Read Genesis 3:1 and the following GC paragraphs:

531.1 – With the earliest history of man, Satan began his efforts to deceive our race. He who had incited rebellion in heaven desired to bring the inhabitants of the earth to unite with him in his warfare against the government of God. Adam and Eve had been perfectly happy in obedience to the law of God, and this fact was a constant testimony against the claim which Satan had urged in heaven, that God's law was oppressive and opposed to the good of His creatures. And furthermore, Satan's envy was excited as he looked upon the beautiful home prepared for the sinless pair. He determined to cause their fall, that, having separated them from God and brought them under his own power, he might gain possession of the earth and here establish his kingdom in opposition to the Most High.

531.2 – Had Satan revealed himself in his real character, he would have been repulsed at once, for Adam and Eve had been warned against this dangerous foe; but he worked in the dark, concealing his purpose, that he might more effectually accomplish his object. Employing as his medium the serpent, then a creature of fascinating appearance, he addressed himself to Eve.... Had Eve refrained from entering into argument with the tempter, she would have been safe; but she ventured to parley with him and fell a victim to his wiles. It is thus that many are still overcome. They doubt and argue concerning the requirements of God; and instead of obeying the divine commands, they accept human theories, which but disguise the devices of Satan.

Discuss Satan's motives, how did he worked to deceive Eve and how she might have avoided the situation.

2. Read Genesis 3:2-8; Romans 5:12 and the following GC paragraphs:

532.1 – … He (Satan) declared that they would become like God, possessing greater wisdom than before and being capable of a higher state of existence. Eve yielded to temptation; and through her influence, Adam was led into sin. They accepted the words of the serpent, that God did not mean what He said; they distrusted their Creator and imagined that He was restricting their liberty and that they might obtain great wisdom and exaltation by transgressing His law.

532.2 – The words of Satan, *"Your eyes shall be opened,"* proved to be true in this sense only: After Adam and Eve had disobeyed God, their eyes were opened to discern their folly; they did know evil, and they tasted the bitter fruit of transgression.

532.3 – In the midst of Eden grew the tree of life, whose fruit had the power of perpetuating life. Had Adam remained obedient to God, he would have continued to enjoy free access to this tree and would have lived forever. But when he sinned he was cut off from partaking of the tree of life, and he became subject to death. The divine sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," points to the utter extinction of life.

533.2a – The only one who promised Adam life in disobedience was the great deceiver. And the declaration of the serpent to Eve in Eden – *"Ye shall not surely die"* – was the first sermon ever preached upon the immortality of the soul.

533.3 – Had man after his fall been allowed free access to the tree of life, he would have lived forever, and thus sin would have been immortalized. But cherubim and a flaming sword kept *"the way of the tree of life"* (Genesis 3:24), and not one of the family of Adam has been permitted to pass that barrier and partake of the life-giving fruit. Therefore there is not an immortal sinner.

What lies did Adam and Eve believe and what did they lose as a result?

3. Read Psalm 6:5; 115:17-18; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Isaiah 38:18-19; John 3:36; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 the following GC paragraphs:

533.2b – …. Yet this declaration, resting solely upon the authority of Satan, is echoed from the pulpits of Christendom and is received by the majority of mankind as readily as it was received by our first parents.... We cannot but wonder at the strange infatuation which renders men so credulous concerning the words of Satan and so unbelieving in regard to the words of God.

534.1 – But after the Fall, Satan bade his angels make a special effort to inculcate the belief in man's natural immortality; and having induced the people to receive this error, they were to lead them on to conclude that the sinner would live in eternal misery. Now the prince of darkness, working through his agents, represents God as a revengeful tyrant, declaring that He plunges into hell all those who do not please Him, and causes them ever to feel His wrath; and that while they suffer unutterable anguish and writhe in the eternal flames, their Creator looks down upon them with satisfaction.

535.1 – How repugnant to every emotion of love and mercy, and even to our sense of justice, is the doctrine that the wicked dead are tormented with fire and brimstone in an eternally burning hell; that for the sins of a brief earthly life they are to suffer torture as long as God shall live. Yet this doctrine has been widely taught and is still embodied in many of the creeds of Christendom. Said a learned doctor of divinity: *"The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever. When they see others who are of the same nature and born under the same circumstances, plunged in such misery, and they so distinguished, it will make them sensible of how happy they are."* Another used these words: *"While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their torment will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy, who, instead of taking the part of these miserable objects, will say, Amen, Alleluia! praise ye the Lord!"*

536.2 – It is beyond the power of the human mind to estimate the evil which has been wrought by the heresy of eternal torment. The religion of the Bible, full of love and goodness, and abounding in compassion, is darkened by superstition and clothed with terror. When we consider in what false colors Satan has painted the character of God, can we wonder that our merciful Creator is feared, dreaded, and even hated? The appalling views of God which have spread over the world from the teachings of the pulpit have made thousands, yes, millions, of skeptics and infidels.

545.2 – Upon the fundamental error of natural immortality rests the doctrine of consciousness in death--a doctrine, like eternal torment, opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures, to the dictates of reason, and to our feelings of humanity. According to the popular belief, the redeemed in heaven are acquainted with all that takes place on the earth and especially with the lives of the friends whom they have left behind. But how could it be a source of happiness to the dead to know the troubles of the living, to witness the sins committed by their own loved ones, and to see them enduring all the sorrows, disappointments, and anguish of life? How much of heaven's bliss would be enjoyed by those who were hovering over their friends on earth? And how utterly revolting is the belief that as soon as the breath leaves the body the soul of the impenitent is consigned to the flames of hell! To what depths of anguish must those be plunged who see their friends passing to the grave unprepared, to enter upon an eternity of woe and sin! Many have been driven to insanity by this harrowing thought.

546.3 – …. If for four thousand years the righteous had gone directly to heaven at death, how could Paul have said that if there is no resurrection, *"they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished*"? (1 Corinthians 15:18) No resurrection would be necessary.

How does popular theology perpetuate the lie of the Immortality of the Soul and eternal burning hell?

Why are these doctrines so dangerous?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21 and the following GC paragraphs:

537.1 – A large class to whom the doctrine of eternal torment is revolting are driven to the opposite error. They see that the Scriptures represent God as a being of love and compassion, and they cannot believe that He will consign His creatures to the fires of an eternally burning hell. But holding that the soul is naturally immortal, they see no alternative but to conclude that all mankind will finally be saved. Many regard the threatenings of the Bible as designed merely to frighten men into obedience, and not to be literally fulfilled. Thus the sinner can live in selfish pleasure, disregarding the requirements of God, and yet expect to be finally received into His favor. Such a doctrine, presuming upon God's mercy, but ignoring His justice, pleases the carnal heart and emboldens the wicked in their iniquity.

538.3 – Thus does the professed minister of Christ reiterate the falsehood uttered by the serpent in Eden: *"Ye shall not surely die. In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods."* He declares that the vilest of sinners – the murderer, the thief, and the adulterer – will after death be prepared to enter into immortal bliss.

538.4-539.1 – …. A pleasing fable indeed, well suited to gratify the carnal heart! This is Satan's own doctrine, and it does his work effectually. Should we be surprised that, with such instruction, wickedness abounds? … It is thus that doubters, unbelievers, and skeptics turn the truth into a lie. And multitudes have been deceived by their sophistry and rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security.

What opposite extreme does Satan promote and why is it also dangerous?

The theory of the immortality of the soul was one of those false doctrines that Rome, borrowing from paganism, incorporated into the religion of Christendom…. (549.2)

5. Read Exodus 34:6-7; Isaiah 3:10-11; Romans 2:2-6; Ephesians 5:1-6; Hebrews 12:14; Revelation 21:6-8; 22:12-15 and the following GC paragraphs:

539.3 – God has given in His word decisive evidence that He will punish the transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary. The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that *"the wages of sin is death,"* that every violation of God's law must receive its just retribution. Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and the hiding of His Father's face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out. All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin. And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression.

541.2 – God has given to men a declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin…. The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.

What is the clear teaching of scripture concerning the fate of unrepentant sinners?

6. Read the following GC paragraphs:

542.1 – Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters. Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests?

542.2 – Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there – every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne – could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.

543.3 – It is in mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace.

Discuss the mercy of God in excluding impenitent sinners from heaven?

7. Read John 14:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 and the following GC paragraphs:

549.3 – Nowhere in the Sacred Scriptures is found the statement that the righteous go to their reward or the wicked to their punishment at death. The patriarchs and prophets have left no such assurance. Christ and His apostles have given no hint of it. The Bible clearly teaches that the dead do not go immediately to heaven. They are represented as sleeping until the resurrection.... Blessed rest for the weary righteous! Time, be it long or short, is but a moment to them. They sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious immortality.... As they are called forth from their deep slumber they begin to think just where they ceased. The last sensation was the pang of death; the last thought, that they were falling beneath the power of the grave. When they arise from the tomb, their first glad thought will be echoed in the triumphal shout: *"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"* 1 Corinthians 15:55

What hope do we have in these promises?

Lesson 29

Can Our Dead Speak to Us?

(see chapter 34)

1. Read the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

551.1-2 – The ministration of holy angels, as presented in the Scriptures, is a truth most comforting and precious to every follower of Christ. But the Bible teaching upon this point has been obscured and perverted by the errors of popular theology……. Here is a channel regarded as sacred, through which Satan works for the accomplishment of his purposes. The fallen angels who do his bidding appear as messengers from the spirit world. While professing to bring the living into communication with the dead, the prince of evil exercises his bewitching influence upon their minds.

What is the basic principle of Spiritualism?

552.1 – He (Satan) has power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with marvelous distinctness. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven, and without suspicion of danger, they give ear *"to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."*

What physical manifestations seem to give support to the claims of Spiritualism?

552.2 – When they have been led to believe that the dead actually return to communicate with them, Satan causes those to appear who went into the grave unprepared. They claim to be happy in heaven and even to occupy exalted positions there, and thus the error is widely taught that no difference is made between the righteous and the wicked. The pretended visitants from the world of spirits sometimes utter cautions and warnings which prove to be correct. Then, as confidence is gained, they present doctrines that directly undermine faith in the Scriptures…. The fact that they state some truths, and are able at times to foretell future events, gives to their statements an appearance of reliability; and their false teachings are accepted by the multitudes as readily, and believed as implicitly, as if they were the most sacred truths of the Bible. The law of God is set aside, the Spirit of grace despised, the blood of the covenant counted an unholy thing. The spirits deny the deity of Christ and place even the Creator on a level with themselves…..

If believed, what fatal deceptions follow?

2. Read Matthew 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10; Revelation 13:13-14 and the following GC paragraphs:

553.1 – Many endeavor to account for spiritual manifestations by attributing them wholly to fraud and sleight of hand on the part of the medium. But while it is true that the results of trickery have often been palmed off as genuine manifestations, there have been, also, marked exhibitions of supernatural power. The mysterious rapping with which modern spiritualism began was not the result of human trickery or cunning, but was the direct work of evil angels, who thus introduced one of the most successful of soul-destroying delusions. Many will be ensnared through the belief that spiritualism is a merely human imposture; when brought face to face with manifestations which they cannot but regard as supernatural, they will be deceived, and will be led to accept them as the great power of God.

553.2 – These persons overlook the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the wonders wrought by Satan and his agents. It was by satanic aid that Pharaoh's magicians were enabled to counterfeit the work of God. Paul testifies that before the second advent of Christ there will be similar manifestations of satanic power.... No mere impostures are here foretold. Men are deceived by the miracles which Satan's agents have power to do, not which they pretend to do.

How can the lie that spiritualism is merely *"a slight of hand"* play into Satan's hands?

3. Read Genesis 3:5; 1 Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 5:13; James 3:14-18; 1 Peter 2:16; 2 Peter 2:10-19 and the following GC paragraphs:

553.3 – The prince of darkness, who has so long bent the powers of his mastermind to the work of deception, skillfully adapts his temptations to men of all classes and conditions. To persons of culture and refinement he presents spiritualism in its more refined and intellectual aspects, and thus succeeds in drawing many into his snare. The wisdom which spiritualism imparts is that described by the apostle James... This, however, the great deceiver conceals when concealment will best suit his purpose. He who could appear clothed with the brightness of the heavenly seraphs before Christ in the wilderness of temptation, comes to men in the most attractive manner as an angel of light. He appeals to the reason by the presentation of elevating themes; he delights the fancy with enrapturing scenes; and he enlists the affections by his eloquent portrayals of love and charity. He excites the imagination to lofty flights, leading men to take so great pride in their own wisdom that in their hearts they despise the Eternal One....

554.1 – Satan beguiles men now as he beguiled Eve in Eden by flattery, by kindling a desire to obtain forbidden knowledge, by exciting ambition for self-exaltation. It was cherishing these evils that caused his fall, and through them he aims to compass the ruin of men. .... Spiritualism teaches *"that man is the creature of progression; that it is his destiny from his birth to progress, even to eternity, toward the Godhead."* ....

554.2 – Thus, in place of the righteousness and perfection of the infinite God, the true object of adoration; in place of the perfect righteousness of His law, the true standard of human attainment, Satan has substituted the sinful, erring nature of man himself as the only object of adoration, the only rule of judgment, or standard of character. This is progress, not upward, but downward.

555.1 – It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that

which it is accustomed to love and reverence. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward.

555.2 – To the self-indulgent, the pleasure-loving, the sensual, spiritualism presents itself under a less subtle disguise than to the more refined and intellectual; in its grosser forms they find that which is in harmony with their inclinations. Satan studies every indication of the frailty of human nature, he marks the sins which each individual is inclined to commit, and then he takes care that opportunities shall not be wanting to gratify the tendency to evil. He tempts men to excess in that which is in itself lawful, causing them, through intemperance, to weaken physical, mental, and moral power. He has destroyed and is destroying thousands through the indulgence of the passions, thus brutalizing the entire nature of man. And to complete his work, he declares, through the spirits that *"true knowledge places man above all law;"* that *"whatever is, is right;"* that *"God doth not condemn;"* and that *"all sins which are committed are innocent."* When the people are thus led to believe that desire is the highest law, that liberty is license, and that man is accountable only to himself, who can wonder that corruption and depravity teem on every hand? Multitudes eagerly accept teachings that leave them at liberty to obey the promptings of the carnal heart. The reins of self-control are laid upon the neck of lust, the powers of mind and soul are made subject to the animal propensities, and Satan exultingly sweeps into his net thousands who profess to be followers of Christ.

What are some of the *"Promises of Spiritualism"*?

Despite the promises, what will be the inevitable result?

4. Read Leviticus 19:31; 20:27; Ecclesiastes 9:5; Isaiah 8:19 and the following GC paragraphs.

556.1 – But none need be deceived by the lying claims of spiritualism. God has given the world sufficient light to enable them to discover the snare. As already shown, the theory which forms the very foundation of spiritualism is at war with the plainest statements of Scripture. The Bible declares that the dead know not anything, that their thoughts have perished; they have no part in anything that is done under the sun; they know nothing of the joys or sorrows of those who were dearest to them on earth.

556.2 – Furthermore, God has expressly forbidden all pretended communication with departed spirits…. The work of dealing with familiar spirits was pronounced an abomination to the Lord, and was solemnly forbidden under penalty of death. The very name of witchcraft is now held in contempt. The claim that men can hold intercourse with evil spirits is regarded as a fable of the Dark Ages. But spiritualism, which numbers its converts by hundreds of thousands, yea, by millions, which has made its way into scientific circles, which has invaded churches, and has found favor in legislative bodies, and even in the courts of kings – this mammoth deception is but a revival, in a new disguise, of the witchcraft condemned and prohibited of old.

"What's old is new again." How is the Bible, more than ever, a safeguard against the deceptions of Spiritism?

5. Read the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

556.3 – If there were no other evidence of the real character of spiritualism, it should be enough for the Christian that the spirits make no difference between righteousness and sin, between the noblest and purest of the apostles of Christ and the most corrupt of the servants of Satan. By representing the basest of men as in heaven, and highly exalted there, Satan says to the world: *"No matter how wicked you are; no matter whether you believe or disbelieve God and the Bible. Live as you please; heaven is your home."* …

557.1 – …. Satan is making the world believe that the Bible is a mere fiction, or at least a book suited to the infancy of the race, but now to be lightly regarded, or cast aside as obsolete. And to take the place of the word of God he holds out spiritual manifestations. Here is a channel wholly under his control; by this means he can make the world believe what he will….

What teachings of spiritualism undermine the Bible?

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558.1 – Even in its present form, so far from being more worthy of toleration than formerly, it is really a more dangerous, because a more subtle, deception. While it formerly denounced Christ and the Bible, it now professes to accept both. But the Bible is interpreted in a manner that is pleasing to the unrenewed heart, while its solemn and vital truths are made of no effect. Love is dwelt upon as the chief attribute of God, but it is degraded to a weak sentimentalism, making little distinction between good and evil. God's justice, His denunciations of sin, the requirements of His holy law, are all kept out of sight. The people are taught to regard the Decalogue as a dead letter. Pleasing, bewitching fables captivate the senses and lead men to reject the Bible as the foundation of their faith. Christ is as verily denied as before; but Satan has so blinded the eyes of the people that the deception is not discerned.

How is modern spiritualism more dangerous that its previous forms?

6. Read Genesis 3:1-6; Ephesians 4:17-19 and the following GC paragraphs:

558.2 – There are few who have any just conception of the deceptive power of spiritualism and the danger of coming under its influence. Many tamper with it merely to gratify their curiosity. They have no real faith in it and would be filled with horror at the thought of yielding themselves to the spirits' control. But they venture upon the forbidden ground, and the mighty destroyer exercises his power upon them against their will…. It is impossible, in their own strength, to break away from the bewitching, alluring spell. Nothing but the power of God, granted in answer to the earnest prayer of faith, can deliver these ensnared souls.

558.3 – All who indulge sinful traits of character, or willfully cherish a known sin, are inviting the temptations of Satan. They separate themselves from God and from the watchcare of His angels; as the evil one presents his deceptions, they are without defense and fall an easy prey. Those who thus place themselves in his power little realize where their course will end. Having achieved their overthrow, the tempter will employ them as his agents to lure others to ruin.

559.1 – … If men had been willing to receive the truth so plainly stated in the Scriptures concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead, they would see in the claims and manifestations of spiritualism the working of Satan with power and signs and lying wonders. But rather than yield the liberty so agreeable to the carnal heart, and renounce the sins which they love, multitudes close their eyes to the light and walk straight on, regardless of warnings, while Satan weaves his snares about them, and they become his prey.

560.1 – Many will be confronted by the spirits of devils personating beloved relatives or friends and declaring the most dangerous heresies. These visitants will appeal to our tenderest sympathies and will work miracles to sustain their pretensions. We must be prepared to withstand them with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything and that they who thus appear are the spirits of devils.

560.2 – … All whose faith is not firmly established upon the word of God will be deceived and overcome. Satan *"works with all deceivableness of unrighteousness"* to gain control of the children of men, and his deceptions will continually increase. But he can gain his object only as men voluntarily yield to his temptations. Those who are earnestly seeking a knowledge of the truth and are striving to purify their souls through obedience – will find, in the God of truth, a sure defense..... He would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than leave one soul that trusts in Him to be overcome by Satan.

561.1 – Marvelous beyond expression is the blindness of the people of this generation. Thousands reject the word of God as unworthy of belief and with eager confidence receive the deceptions of Satan..... Nothing can arouse their fears. So fully have they yielded to the tempter, so closely are they united with him, and so thoroughly imbued with his spirit, that they have no power and no inclination to break away from his snare.

What are some of the ways Satan ensnares people?

What is the only safeguard?

Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden …. Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time..... Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion. The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God. ---- 561.2

Last Day Events

Lesson 30

Liberty of Conscience Threatened

(see chapter 35)

1. Read the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

563.1 – Romanism is now regarded by Protestants with far greater favor than in former years. In those countries where Catholicism is not in the ascendancy, and the papists are taking a conciliatory course in order to gain influence, there is an increasing indifference concerning the doctrines that separate the reformed churches from the papal hierarchy; the opinion is gaining ground that, after all, we do not differ so widely upon vital points as has been supposed, and that a little concession on our part will bring us into a better understanding with Rome….

563.2 – The defenders of the papacy declare that the church has been maligned, and the Protestant world are inclined to accept the statement. Many urge that it is unjust to judge the church of today by the abominations and absurdities that marked her reign during the centuries of ignorance and darkness. They excuse her horrible cruelty as the result of the barbarism of the times and plead that the influence of modern civilization has changed her sentiments.

564.1-2 – Have these persons forgotten the claim of infallibility put forth for eight hundred years by this haughty power? …. The papal church will never relinquish her claim to infallibility. All that she has done in her persecution of those who reject her dogmas she holds to be right; and would she not repeat the same acts, should the opportunity be presented? Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed and Rome be reinstated in her former power, and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution.

565.3-4 – …. Romanism as a system is no more in harmony with the gospel of Christ now than at any former period in her history. The Protestant churches are in great darkness, or they would discern the signs of the times. The Roman Church is far-reaching in her plans and modes of operation. She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to regain control of the world, to re-establish persecution, and to undo all that Protestantism has done. Catholicism is gaining ground upon every side…. These things should awaken the anxiety of all who prize the pure principles of the gospel.

566.1 – Protestants have tampered with and patronized popery …. Men are closing their eyes to the real character of Romanism and the dangers to be apprehended from her supremacy. The people need to be aroused to resist the advances of this most dangerous foe to civil and religious liberty.

How has modern Protestantism's view of Catholicism changed?

566.2 – …. Magnificent churches, imposing processions, golden altars, jeweled shrines, choice paintings, and exquisite sculpture appeal to the love of beauty. The ear also is captivated. The music is unsurpassed. The rich notes of the deep-toned organ, blending with the melody of many voices as it swells through the lofty domes and pillared aisles of her grand cathedrals, cannot fail to impress the mind with awe and reverence.

566.3 – This outward splendor, pomp, and ceremony, that only mocks the longings of the sin-sick soul, is an evidence of inward corruption. The religion of Christ needs not such attractions to recommend it. In the light shining from the cross, true Christianity appears so pure and lovely that no external decorations can enhance its true worth. It is the beauty of holiness, a meek and quiet spirit, which is of value with God.

567.2 – A religion of externals is attractive to the unrenewed heart. The pomp and ceremony of the Catholic worship has a seductive, bewitching power, by which many are deceived; and they come to look upon the Roman Church as the very gate of heaven. None but those who have planted their feet firmly upon the foundation of truth, and whose hearts are renewed by the Spirit of God, are proof against her influence. Thousands who have not an experimental knowledge of Christ will be led to accept the forms of godliness without the power. Such a religion is just what the multitudes desire.

What are some features of a *"religion of externals"* and why is it dangerous?

567.3 – The church's claim to the right to pardon leads the Romanist to feel at liberty to sin; and the ordinance of confession, without which her pardon is not granted, tends also to give license to evil. He who kneels before fallen man, and opens in confession the secret thoughts and imaginations of his heart, is debasing his manhood and degrading every noble instinct of his soul. In unfolding the sins of his life to a priest – an erring, sinful mortal, and too often corrupted with wine and licentiousness – his standard of character is lowered, and he is defiled in consequence. His thought of God is degraded to the likeness of fallen humanity, for the priest stands as a representative of God. This degrading confession of man to man is the secret spring from which has flowed much of the evil that is defiling the world and fitting it for the final destruction. Yet to him who loves self-indulgence, it is more pleasing to confess to a fellow mortal than to open the soul to God. It is more palatable to human nature to do penance than to renounce sin; it is easier to mortify the flesh by sackcloth and nettles and galling chains than to crucify fleshly lusts. Heavy is the yoke which the carnal heart is willing to bear rather than bow to the yoke of Christ.

Why is the doctrine of the confessional so dangerous?

568.3 – The worship of images and relics, the invocation of saints, and the exaltation of the pope are devices of Satan to attract the minds of the people from God and from His Son. To accomplish their ruin, he endeavors to turn their attention from Him through whom alone they can find salvation. ….

570.1 – If we desire to understand the determined cruelty of Satan, manifested for hundreds of years, not among those who never heard of God, but in the very heart and throughout the extent of Christendom, we have only to look at the history of Romanism. Through this mammoth system of deception the prince of evil achieves his purpose of bringing dishonor to God and wretchedness to man. And as we see how he succeeds in disguising himself and accomplishing his work through the leaders of the church, we may better understand why he has so great antipathy to the Bible. If that Book is read, the mercy and love of God will be revealed; it will be seen that He lays upon men none of these heavy burdens. All that He asks is a broken and contrite heart, a humble, obedient spirit.

How has Satan developed Catholicism to achieve his purposes?

How does the God of the Bible different from this religious system?

2. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 and the following GC paragraphs:

571.1 – The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties. She has clothed herself in Christlike garments; but she is unchanged. Every principle of the papacy that existed in past ages exists today. The doctrines devised in the darkest ages are still held. Let none deceive themselves. The papacy that Protestants are now so ready to honor is the same that ruled the world in the days of the Reformation, when men of God stood up, at the peril of their lives, to expose her iniquity. She possesses the same pride and arrogant assumption that lorded it over kings and princes, and claimed the prerogatives of God. Her spirit is no less cruel and despotic now than when she crushed out human liberty and slew the saints of the Most High.

571.2 – The papacy is just what prophecy declared that she would be, the apostasy of the latter times…. It is a part of her policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but beneath the variable appearance of the chameleon she conceals the invariable venom of the serpent…. Shall this power, whose record for a thousand years is written in the blood of the saints, be now acknowledged as a part of the church of Christ?

571.3-4 – It is not without reason that the claim has been put forth in Protestant countries that Catholicism differs less widely from Protestantism than in former times. There has been a change; but the change is not in the papacy. Catholicism indeed resembles much of the Protestantism that now exists, because Protestantism

has so greatly degenerated since the days of the Reformers….. Instead of standing in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints, they are now, as it were, apologizing to Rome for their uncharitable opinion of her, begging pardon for their bigotry.

572.2 – A prayerful study of the Bible would show Protestants the real character of the papacy and would cause them to abhor and to shun it; but many are so wise in their own conceit that they feel no need of humbly seeking God that they may be led into the truth. Although priding themselves on their enlightenment, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. They must have some means of quieting their consciences, and they seek that which is least spiritual and humiliating. What they desire is a method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him. The papacy is well adapted to meet the wants of all these. It is prepared for two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world--those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins. Here is the secret of its power.

Has the Papacy of old changed? How has she masked her real intentions?

What prevents Protestants from seeing her as she is?

3. Read the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

573.1 – In the movements now in progress in the United States to secure for the institutions and usages of the church the support of the state, Protestants are following in the steps of papists. Nay, more, they are opening the door for the papacy to regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she has lost in the Old World. And that which gives greater significance to this movement is the fact that the principal object contemplated is the enforcement of Sunday observance – a custom which originated with Rome, and which she claims as the sign of her authority. It is the spirit of the papacy – the spirit of conformity to worldly customs, the veneration for human traditions above the commandments of God – that is permeating the Protestant churches and leading them on to do the same work of Sunday exaltation which the papacy has done before them.

In what ways have Protestant churches followed in the footsteps of Rome?

573.2 – If the reader would understand the agencies to be employed in the soon-coming contest, he has but to trace the record of the means which Rome employed for the same object in ages past…

574.1-2 – Royal edicts, general councils, and church ordinances sustained by secular power were the steps by which the pagan festival attained its position of honor in the Christian world. The first public measure enforcing Sunday observance was the law enacted by Constantine. (A.D. 321) …. The royal mandate not proving a sufficient substitute for divine authority, Eusebius, a bishop who sought the favor of princes, and who was the special friend and flatterer of Constantine, advanced the claim that Christ had transferred the Sabbath to Sunday. Not a single testimony of the Scriptures was produced in proof of the new doctrine…. But the Sunday argument, groundless as it was, served to embolden men in trampling upon the Sabbath of the Lord. All who desired to be honored by the world accepted the popular festival.

577.2 – But notwithstanding all the efforts to establish Sunday sacredness, papists themselves publicly confessed the divine authority of the Sabbath and the human origin of the institution by which it had been supplanted. In the sixteenth century a papal council plainly declared: *"Let all Christians remember that the seventh day was consecrated by God, and hath been received and observed, not only by the Jews, but by all others who pretend to worship God; though we Christians have changed their Sabbath into the Lord's Day."* Those who were tampering with the divine law were not ignorant of the character of their work. They were deliberately setting themselves above God.

Trace the steps in the establishment of Sunday worship.

4. Read Revelation 13:1-16 and the following GC paragraphs:

578.2 – … The word of God teaches that these scenes are to be repeated as Roman Catholics and Protestants shall unite for the exaltation of the Sunday.

578.3 – … It has been shown that the United States is the power represented by the beast with lamblike horns, and that this prophecy will be fulfilled when the United States shall enforce Sunday observance, which Rome claims as the special acknowledgment of her supremacy. But in this homage to the papacy the United States will not be alone. The influence of Rome in the countries that once acknowledged her dominion is still far from being destroyed…. In both the Old and the New World, the papacy will receive homage in the honor paid to the Sunday institution, that rests solely upon the authority of the Roman Church.

580.1 – Marvelous in her shrewdness and cunning is the Roman Church. She can read what is to be. She bides her time, seeing that the Protestant churches are paying her homage in their acceptance of the false sabbath and that they are preparing to enforce it by the very means which she herself employed in bygone days…. Who understands better than the papal leaders how to deal with those who are disobedient to the church?

581.1 – And let it be remembered, it is the boast of Rome that she never changes. The principles of Gregory VII and Innocent III are still the principles of the Roman Catholic Church. And had she but the power, she would put them in practice with as much vigor now as in past centuries. Protestants little know what they are doing when they propose to accept the aid of Rome in the work of Sunday exaltation…. Let the principle once be established

in the United States that the church may employ or control the power of the state; that religious observances may be enforced by secular laws; in short, that the authority of church and state is to dominate the conscience, and the triumph of Rome in this country is assured.

581.2 – God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated…. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution.

How will Rome use the complicity of Protestantism and the power of the US government to further her own agenda?

Lesson 31

The Impending Conflict

(see chapter 36)

1. Read Psalm 1; Isaiah 59:14-15; Hosea 4:1-9; Matthew 5:17-18; Romans 1:16-32; 2:13 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

582.1 – From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his rebellion against the Creator, and though he was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon the earth. To deceive men, and thus lead them to transgress God's law, is the object which he has steadfastly pursued. Whether this be accomplished by casting aside the law altogether, or by rejecting one of its precepts, the result will be ultimately the same.

582.2 – In seeking to cast contempt upon the divine statutes, Satan has perverted the doctrines of the Bible, and errors have thus become incorporated into the faith of thousands who profess to believe the Scriptures. The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God. Upon this battle we are now entering – a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.

582.3 – …. Infidelity prevails to an alarming extent, not in the world merely, but in the church. Many have come to deny doctrines which are the very pillars of the Christian faith. The great facts of creation as presented by the inspired writers, the fall of man, the atonement, and the perpetuity of the law of God, are practically rejected, either wholly or in part, by a large share of the professedly Christian world…..

What is Satan's main purpose in his warfare against God?

How does a rejection of God's law influence the rejection of other biblical doctrines?

584.1 – No error accepted by the Christian world strikes more boldly against the authority of Heaven, none is more directly opposed to the dictates of reason, none is more pernicious in its results, than the modern doctrine, so rapidly gaining ground, that God's law is no longer binding upon men. Every nation has its laws, which command respect and obedience; no government could exist without them; and can it be conceived that the Creator of the heavens and the earth has no law to govern the beings He has made? Suppose that

prominent ministers were publicly to teach that the statutes which govern their land and protect the rights of its citizens were not obligatory – that they restricted the liberties of the people, and therefore ought not to be obeyed; how long would such men be tolerated in the pulpit? But is it a graver offense to disregard the laws of states and nations than to trample upon those divine precepts which are the foundation of all government?

584.3 – Wherever the divine precepts are rejected, sin ceases to appear sinful or righteousness desirable. Those who refuse to submit to the government of God are wholly unfitted to govern themselves. Through their pernicious teachings the spirit of insubordination is implanted in the hearts of children and youth, who are naturally impatient of control; and a lawless, licentious state of society results. While scoffing at the credulity of those who obey the requirements of God, the multitudes eagerly accept the delusions of Satan….

585.2 – Already the doctrine that men are released from obedience to God's requirements has weakened the force of moral obligation and opened the floodgates of iniquity upon the world. …..

586.1 – Courts of justice are corrupt. Rulers are actuated by desire for gain and love of sensual pleasure. Intemperance has beclouded the faculties of many so that Satan has almost complete control of them. Jurists are perverted, bribed, deluded. Drunkenness and revelry, passion, envy, dishonesty of every sort, are represented among those who administer the laws…

What is the modern doctrine gaining ground in the Christian world?

What are the inevitable results?

586.2 – …. Now that Satan can no longer keep the world under his control by withholding the Scriptures, he resorts to other means to accomplish the same object. To destroy faith in the Bible serves his purpose as well as to destroy the Bible itself. By introducing the belief that God's law is not binding, he as effectually leads men to transgress as if they were wholly ignorant of its precepts. And now, as in former ages, he has worked through the church to further his designs.… The teachings of religious leaders have opened the door to infidelity, to spiritualism, and to contempt for God's holy law; and upon these leaders rests a fearful responsibility for the iniquity that exists in the Christian world.

How have the teachings of religious leaders contributed to the problem?

2. Read the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

587.1 – … It is one of Satan's devices to combine with falsehood just enough truth to give it plausibility. The leaders of the Sunday movement may advocate reforms which the people need, principles which are in harmony with the Bible; yet while there is with these a requirement which is contrary to God's law, His servants cannot unite with them. Nothing can justify them in setting aside the commandments of God for the precepts of men.

What is one of Satan's favorite devices?

Mrs. White's counsel is challenging. Discuss.

588.1 – … The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.

What 3 agencies will join forces for the soul purpose of trampling the rights of conscience?

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588.2 – As spiritualism more closely imitates the nominal Christianity of the day, it has greater power to deceive and ensnare. Satan himself is converted, after the modern order of things. He will appear in the character of an angel of light. Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. And as the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power.

588.3 – The line of distinction between professed Christians and the ungodly is now hardly distinguishable. Church members love what the world loves and are ready to join with them, and Satan determines to unite them in one body and thus strengthen his cause by sweeping all into the ranks of spiritualism. Papists, who boast of miracles as a certain sign of the true church, will be readily deceived by this wonder-working power; and Protestants, having cast away the shield of truth, will also be deluded. Papists, Protestants, and worldlings will alike accept the form of godliness without the power, and they will see in this union a grand movement for the conversion of the world and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium.

589.1 – Through spiritualism, Satan appears as a benefactor of the race, healing the diseases of the people, and professing to present a new and more exalted system of religious faith; but at the same time he works as a destroyer. His temptations are leading multitudes to ruin. Intemperance dethrones reason; sensual indulgence, strife, and bloodshed follow. Satan delights in war, for it excites the worst passions of the soul and then sweeps into eternity its victims steeped in vice and blood. It is his object to incite the nations to war against one another, for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God.

What role will Spiritualism play in Satan's final attempts to secure our planet to his side?

3. Read 1 Kings 18:17-18 and the following GC paragraphs:

589.2 – Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows. When he was suffered to afflict Job, how quickly flocks and herds, servants, houses, children, were swept away, one trouble succeeding another as in a moment. It is God that shields His creatures and hedges them in from the power of the destroyer. But the Christian world have shown contempt for the law of Jehovah; and the Lord will do just what He has declared that He would – He will withdraw His blessings from the earth and remove His protecting care from those who are rebelling against His law and teaching and forcing others to do the same. Satan has control of all whom God does not especially guard. He will favor and prosper some in order to further his own designs, and he will bring trouble upon others and lead men to believe that it is God who is afflicting them.

589.3 – While appearing to the children of men as a great physician who can heal all their maladies, he will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power.

To what extent is Satan responsible for the plagues, famine and *"natural disasters"* on earth?

Who is accused of responsibility?

4. Read Revelation 12:17 and the following GC paragraphs:

590.1 – And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils. The class that have provoked the displeasure of Heaven will charge all their troubles upon those whose obedience to God's commandments is a perpetual reproof to transgressors. It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath; that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced; and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity. Thus the accusation urged of old against the servant of God will be repeated and upon grounds equally well established .... As the wrath of the people shall be excited by false charges, they will pursue a course toward God's ambassadors very similar to that which apostate Israel pursued toward Elijah.

590.2 – The miracle-working power manifested through spiritualism will exert its influence against those who choose to obey God rather than men. Communications from the spirits will declare that God has sent them to convince the rejecters of Sunday of their error, affirming that the laws of the land should be obeyed as the law of God. They will lament the great wickedness in the world and second the testimony of religious teachers that the degraded state of morals is caused by the desecration of Sunday. Great will be the indignation excited against all who refuse to accept their testimony.

591.1 – Satan's policy in this final conflict with God's people is the same that he employed in the opening of the great controversy in heaven. He professed to be seeking to promote the stability of the divine government, while secretly bending every effort to secure its overthrow. And the very work which he was thus endeavoring to accomplish he charged upon the loyal angels. The same policy of deception has marked the history of the Roman Church. It has professed to act as the vicegerent of Heaven, while seeking to exalt itself above God and to change His law. Under the rule of Rome, those who suffered death for their fidelity to the gospel were denounced as evildoers; they were declared to be in league with Satan; and every possible means was employed to cover them with reproach, to cause them to appear in the eyes of the people and even to themselves as the vilest of criminals. So it will be now. While Satan seeks to destroy those who honor God's law, he will cause them to be accused as lawbreakers, as men who are dishonoring God and bringing judgments upon the world.

As calamity increases, who will be accused of being responsible for the loss of divine favor?

Why will this group be blamed?

5. Read the following GC paragraphs:

591.2 – God never forces the will or the conscience; but Satan's constant resort – to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise **seduce** – is compulsion by cruelty. Through **fear or force** he endeavors to rule the conscience and to secure homage to himself. To accomplish this, he works through both religious and secular authorities, moving them to the enforcement of human laws in defiance of the law of God.

592.1 – Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be **denounced as enemies of law and order**, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth. … Ministers who deny the obligation of the divine law will present from the pulpit the duty of yielding obedience to the civil authorities as ordained of God. In legislative halls and courts of justice, commandment keepers will be **misrepresented and condemned**.

592.2 – As the Protestant churches reject the clear, Scriptural arguments in defense of God's law, they will long to silence those whose faith they cannot overthrow by the Bible. …

592.3 – The dignitaries of church and state will unite to **bribe, persuade, or compel** all classes to honor the Sunday. The lack of divine authority will be supplied by oppressive enactments. Political corruption is destroying love of justice and regard for truth; and even in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance.

What are Satan's methods for securing allegiance?

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How will this affect those who cannot be persuaded to disobey God?

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Liberty of conscience, which has cost so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected.

Lesson 32

The Scriptures a Safeguard

(see chapter 37)

1. Read Psalm 119:104-105; Mark 13:22-23; 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and the following GC paragraphs:

593.1 – …. The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God's work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.

593.2 – Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?

Why is a knowledge of God's word more important than ever?

2. Read Mark 8:31-33 and the following GC paragraph:

594.1 – Before His crucifixion the Saviour explained to His disciples that He was to be put to death and to rise again from the tomb, and angels were present to impress His words on minds and hearts. But the disciples were looking for temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and they could not tolerate the thought that He in whom all their hopes centered should suffer an ignominious death. The words which they needed to remember were banished from their minds; and when the time of trial came, it found them unprepared. The death of Jesus as fully destroyed their hopes as if He had not forewarned them. So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the disciples by the words of Christ. The events connected with the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble, are clearly presented. But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed. Satan watches to catch away every impression that would make them wise unto salvation, and the time of trouble will find them unready.

Why were the disciples unprepared for the death of Christ?

What is the lesson for us?

3. Read 2 Timothy 4:3; Revelation 14:6-10 and the following GC paragraph:

594.2 – When God sends to men warnings so important that they are represented as proclaimed by holy angels flying in the midst of heaven, He requires every person endowed with reasoning powers to heed the message. The fearful judgments denounced against the worship of the beast and his image … should lead all to a diligent study of the prophecies to learn what the mark of the beast is, and how they are to avoid receiving it. But the masses of the people turn away their ears from hearing the truth and are turned unto fables….. The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love.

How will most people respond God's final messages of warning?

Why?

4. Read Psalm 20:6; 118:8-9; Matthew 7:15-23; 23; John 5:39-40; Romans 6:16; 2 Peter 2:1-3 and the following GC paragraphs:

595.2 – Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. Then, by controlling the minds of these leaders, he can influence the multitudes according to his will.

596.4 – Notwithstanding the Bible is full of warnings against false teachers, many are ready thus to commit the keeping of their souls to the clergy….. Though reason and conscience are convinced, these deluded souls dare not think differently from the minister; and their individual judgment, their eternal interests, are sacrificed to the unbelief, the pride and prejudice, of another.

597.1 – Many are the ways by which Satan works through human influence to bind his captives. He secures multitudes to himself by attaching them by the silken cords of affection to those who are enemies of the cross of Christ. Whatever this attachment may be, parental, filial, conjugal, or social, the effect is the same; the opposers of truth exert their power to control the conscience, and the souls held under their sway have not sufficient courage or independence to obey their own convictions of duty.

597.2 – The truth and the glory of God are inseparable; it is impossible for us, with the Bible within our reach, to honor God by erroneous opinions. Many claim that it matters not what one believes, if his life is only right. But the life is molded by the faith. If light and truth is within our reach, and we neglect to improve the privilege of hearing and seeing it, we virtually reject it; we are choosing darkness rather than light.

What are some ways that Satan attempts to interfere with our search of Scripture?

5. Read Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 17:9 and the following GC paragraphs:

597.3 – …. Ignorance is no excuse for error or sin, when there is every opportunity to know the will of God. A man is traveling and comes to a place where there are several roads and a guideboard indicating where each one leads. If he disregards the guideboard, and takes whichever road seems to him to be right, he may be ever so sincere, but will in all probability find himself on the wrong road.

598.1 – God has given us His word that we may become acquainted with its teachings and know for ourselves what He requires of us…. Ignorance will not excuse young or old, nor release them from the punishment due for the transgression of God's law; because there is in their hands a faithful presentation of that law and of its principles and claims. It is not enough to have good intentions; it is not enough to do what a man thinks is right or what the minister tells him is right. His soul's salvation is at stake, and he should search the Scriptures for himself. However strong may be his convictions, however confident he may be that the minister knows what is truth, this is not his foundation. He has a chart pointing out every waymark on the heavenward journey, and he ought not to guess at anything.

598.2 – It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God.

Why are ignorance or sincerity or good intentions no excuse for our lack of understanding Biblical truth?

6. Read the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

598.3 – The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers.... The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. .... If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error.

What rule of Bible interpretation would keep us from wandering into error?

599.1 – We should exert all the powers of the mind in the study of the Scriptures and should task the understanding to comprehend, as far as mortals can, the deep things of God; yet we must not forget that the docility and submission of a child is the true spirit of the learner. Scriptural difficulties can never be mastered by the same methods that are employed in grappling with philosophical problems. We should not engage in the study of the Bible with that self-reliance with which so many enter the domains of science, but with a prayerful dependence upon God and a sincere desire to learn His will. We must come with a humble and teachable spirit to obtain knowledge from the great I AM. Otherwise, evil angels will so blind our minds and harden our hearts that we shall not be impressed by the truth.

What sort of spirit should we have as we seek to understanding of the deep things of God?

7. Read Psalm 119:11; Matthew 10:19-20; John 14:26 and the following GC paragraphs:

599.3 – The Bible should never be studied without prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can cause us to feel the importance of those things easy to be understood, or prevent us from wresting truths difficult of comprehension. It is the office of heavenly angels to prepare the heart so to comprehend God's word that we shall be charmed with its beauty, admonished by its warnings, or animated and strengthened by its promises. .... Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God's promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons. But angels are round about those who are willing to be taught in divine things; and in the time of great necessity they will bring to their remembrance the very truths which are needed.

601.1 – We are living in the most solemn period of this world's history. The destiny of earth's teeming multitudes is about to be decided. Our own future well-being and also the salvation of other souls depend upon the course which we now pursue. We need to be guided by the Spirit of truth. .... We should now seek a deep and living experience in the things of God. We have not a moment to lose. Events of vital importance are taking place around us; we are on Satan's enchanted ground. Sleep not, sentinels of God; the foe is lurking near, ready at any moment, should you become lax and drowsy, to spring upon you and make you his prey.

Discuss the importance of prayer and the Holy Spirit to our understanding of Scripture.

8. Read Jeremiah 17:7-8 and the following GC paragraphs:

601.2 – Many are deceived as to their true condition before God. They congratulate themselves upon the wrong acts which they do not commit, and forget to enumerate the good and noble deeds which God requires of them, but which they have neglected to perform. It is not enough that they are trees in the garden of God. They are to answer His expectation by bearing fruit. He holds them accountable for their failure to accomplish all the good which they could have done, through His grace strengthening them…..

602.1 – When the testing time shall come, those who have made God's word their rule of life will be revealed. In summer there is no noticeable difference between evergreens and other trees; but when the blasts of winter come, the evergreens remain unchanged, while other trees are stripped of their foliage. So the falsehearted professor may not now be distinguished from the real Christian, but the time is just upon us when the difference will be apparent. Let opposition arise, let bigotry and intolerance again bear sway, let persecution be kindled, and the halfhearted and hypocritical will waver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, than in days of prosperity.

How does the testing time reveal the true character of people who claim to be followers of God?

Lesson 33

The Final Warning

(see chapter 38)

1. Read Revelation 14:8-10; 18:1-5 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

603.2 – …. A terrible condition of the religious world is here described. With every rejection of truth the minds of the people will become darker, their hearts more stubborn, until they are entrenched in an infidel hardihood. In defiance of the warnings which God has given, they will continue to trample upon one of the precepts of the Decalogue, until they are led to persecute those who hold it sacred. Christ is set at nought in the contempt placed upon His word and His people. As the teachings of spiritualism are accepted by the churches, the restraint imposed upon the carnal heart is removed, and the profession of religion will become a cloak to conceal the basest iniquity. A belief in spiritual manifestations opens the door to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and thus the influence of evil angels will be felt in the churches.

604.1 – … She (Babylon) has filled up the measure of her guilt, and destruction is about to fall upon her. But God still has a people in Babylon; and before the visitation of His judgments these faithful ones must be called out, that they partake not of her sins and *"receive not of her plagues."* Hence the movement symbolized by the angel coming down from heaven, lightening the earth with his glory and crying mightily with a strong voice, announcing the sins of Babylon. In connection with his message the call is heard: *"Come out of her, My people."* These announcements, uniting with the 3rd angel's message, constitute the final warning to be given to the inhabitants of the earth.

What is the condition of the RELIGIOUS world as described in Revelation 14 and 18?

What is the final 2-fold warning to be given to the inhabitants of earth?

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604.2 – Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought. The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that *"all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond"* (Revelation 13:16), shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death. On the other hand, the law of God enjoining the Creator's rest day demands obedience and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts.

605.2 – The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between **those who serve God and those who serve Him not.** While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the

state … the keeping of the true Sabbath …. is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.

What is the great final issue?

What are the 2 choices that surround the issue?

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What is the outcome depending on your choice?

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605.3 – Heretofore those who presented the truths of the 3rd angel's message have often been regarded as mere alarmists. Their predictions that religious intolerance would gain control in the United States, that church and state would unite to persecute those who keep the commandments of God, have been pronounced groundless and absurd. It has been confidently declared that this land could never become other than what it has been – the defender of religious freedom. But as the question of enforcing Sunday observance is widely agitated, the event so long doubted and disbelieved is seen to be approaching, and the third message will produce an effect which it could not have had before.

How will the question of Sunday observance ultimately give power to the 3rd angel's message?

606.2 – Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed….. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them. The sins of Babylon will be laid open. **The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power – all will be unmasked.** By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven. As the people go to their former teachers with the eager inquiry, Are these things so? the ministers present fables, prophesy smooth things, to soothe their fears and quiet the awakened conscience. But since many refuse to be satisfied with the mere authority of men and demand a plain *"Thus saith the Lord,"* the popular ministry, like the Pharisees of old, filled with anger as their authority is questioned, will denounce the message as of Satan and stir up the sin-loving multitudes to revile and persecute those who proclaim it.

What three evils are to be unmasked in the final warning?

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607.1 – As the controversy extends into new fields and the minds of the people are called to God's downtrodden law, Satan is astir. The power attending the message will only madden those who oppose it. The clergy will put forth almost superhuman efforts to shut away the light lest it should shine upon their flocks. By every means at their command they will endeavor to suppress the discussion of these vital questions. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and, in this work, papists and Protestants unite. As the movement for Sunday enforcement becomes more bold and decided, the law will be invoked against commandment keepers. They will be threatened with fines and imprisonment, and some will be offered positions of influence, and other rewards and advantages, as inducements to renounce their faith. But their steadfast answer is: *"Show us from the word of God our error"* – the same plea that was made by Luther under similar circumstances. Those who are arraigned before the courts make a strong vindication of the truth, and some who hear them are led to take their stand to keep all the commandments of God. Thus light will be brought before thousands who otherwise would know nothing of these truths.

What results follow?

How will persecution affect the spread of the message?

2. Read Psalm 91; Jeremiah 15:15-21; 20:7-11; Matthew 10:34-36; 2 Timothy 3:12 and following GC paragraphs:

608.1 – Conscientious obedience to the word of God will be treated as rebellion. Blinded by Satan, the parent will exercise harshness and severity toward the believing child; the master or mistress will oppress the commandment-keeping servant. Affection will be alienated; children will be disinherited and driven from home. … As the defenders of truth refuse to honor the Sunday-sabbath, some of them will be thrust into prison, some will be exiled, some will be treated as slaves. To human wisdom all this now seems impossible; but as the restraining Spirit of God shall be withdrawn from men, and they shall be under the control of Satan, who hates the divine precepts, there will be strange developments. The heart can be very cruel when God's fear and love are removed.

608.2 – As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them.

608.3 – In this time of persecution the faith of the Lord's servants will be tried. They have faithfully given the warning, looking to God and to His word alone. God's Spirit, moving upon their hearts, has constrained them to speak. Stimulated with holy zeal, and with the divine impulse strong upon them, they entered upon the performance of their duties without coldly calculating the consequences of speaking to the people the word which the Lord had given them. They have not consulted their temporal interests, nor sought to preserve their reputation or their lives. Yet when the storm of opposition and reproach bursts upon them, some, overwhelmed with consternation, will be ready to exclaim: *"Had we foreseen the consequences of our words, we would have held our peace."* They are hedged in with difficulties. Satan assails them with fierce temptations. The work which they have undertaken seems far beyond their ability to accomplish. They are threatened with destruction. The enthusiasm which animated them is gone; yet they cannot turn back. Then, feeling their utter helplessness, they flee to the Mighty One for strength. They remember that the words which they have spoken were not theirs, but His who bade them give the warning. God put the truth into their hearts, and they could not forbear to proclaim it.

609.1 – The same trials have been experienced by men of God in ages past. Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Tyndale, Baxter, Wesley, urged that all doctrines be brought to the test of the Bible and declared that they would renounce everything which it condemned. Against these men persecution raged with relentless fury; yet they ceased not to declare the truth. Different periods in the history of the church have each been marked by the development of some special truth, adapted to the necessities of God's people at that time. Every new truth has made its way against hatred and opposition; those who were blessed with its light were tempted and tried. The Lord gives a special truth for the people in an emergency. Who dare refuse to publish it? He commands His servants to present the last invitation of mercy to the world. They cannot remain silent, except at the peril of their souls. Christ's ambassadors have nothing to do with consequences. They must perform their duty and leave results with God.

In what ways will the faith of God’s servants be tested and tried?

How do God’s people respond to the task given to them?

3. Read Jeremiah 38:1-6; Daniel 3:6-21; 6:4-17; John 16:32-33; Acts 2:17, 41; Hebrews 11:32-12:2 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

610.1 – As the opposition rises to a fiercer height, the servants of God are again perplexed; for it seems to them that they have brought the crisis. But conscience and the word of God assure them that their course is right; and although the trials continue, they are strengthened to bear them. The contest grows closer and sharper, but their faith and courage rise with the emergency. Their testimony is: *"We dare not tamper with God's word, dividing His holy law; calling one portion essential and another nonessential, to gain the favor of the world. The Lord whom we serve is able to deliver us. Christ has conquered the powers of earth; and shall we be afraid of a world already conquered?"*

610.2 – Persecution in its varied forms is the development of a principle which will exist as long as Satan exists and Christianity has vital power. No man can serve God without enlisting against himself the opposition of the hosts of darkness. Evil angels will assail him, alarmed that his influence is taking the prey from their hands. Evil men, rebuked by his example, will unite with them in seeking to separate him from God by alluring temptations. When these do not succeed, then a compelling power is employed to force the conscience.

As persecution increases, how does the testimony of those who have gone before and the promises of Jesus enable his people to endure?

611.3 – The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close.

612.1-2 – Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.... Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side.

What will be the results of the work of these faith servants?

Lesson 34

The Time of Trouble

(see chapter 39)

1. Read Ezekiel 10:4, 18-19; Daniel 12:1; Matthew 23:37-38 and 24:1, 37-39 and the following GC paragraphs:

613.2 – When the 3rd angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work …. and they are prepared for the trying hour before them.… Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, *"It is done;"* and all the angelic host lay off their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: *"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."* Revelation 22:11. Every case has been decided for life or death. Christ has made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The number of His subjects is made up…

614.1 – When He (Jesus) leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.

615.1 – When God's presence was finally withdrawn from the Jewish nation, priests and people knew it not. Though under the control of Satan, and swayed by the most horrible and malignant passions, they still regarded themselves as the chosen of God. The ministration in the temple continued; sacrifices were offered upon its polluted altars, and daily the divine blessing was invoked upon a people guilty of the blood of God's dear Son and seeking to slay His ministers and apostles. So when the irrevocable decision of the sanctuary has been pronounced and the destiny of the world has been forever fixed, the inhabitants of the earth will know it not. The forms of religion will be continued by a people from whom the Spirit of God has been finally withdrawn; and the satanic zeal with which the prince of evil will inspire them for the accomplishment of his malignant designs, will bear the semblance of zeal for God.

What happens when Jesus' work in the Most Holy Place is concluded?

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2. Read John 11:50 and the following GC paragraphs:

614.3 – Those who honor the law of God have been accused of bringing judgments upon the world, and they will be regarded as the cause of the fearful convulsions of nature and the strife and bloodshed among men that are filling the earth with woe. The power attending the last warning has enraged the wicked; their anger is kindled against all who have received the message, and Satan will excite to still greater intensity the spirit of hatred and persecution.

615.2 – As the Sabbath has become the special point of controversy throughout Christendom, and religious and secular authorities have combined to enforce the observance of the Sunday, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand will make them objects of universal execration. It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness…. This argument will appear conclusive; and a decree will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the 4th commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death…

Who will be blamed for the strife and bloodshed brought by Satan?

What will be the penalty?

3. Read Genesis 32:1-13, 22-28; Jeremiah 30:5-7; Psalm 22; Malachi 3:1-4; Revelation 2:17; 12:10-11 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

616.1 – The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. …

616.2 – Jacob's night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau represents the experience of God's people in the time of trouble…. On reaching the borders of the land, he was filled with terror by the tidings of Esau's approach at the head of a band of warriors, doubtless bent upon revenge…. And to the burden of anxiety and fear was added the crushing weight of self-reproach, for it was his own sin that had brought this danger. His only hope was in the mercy of God; his only defense must be prayer….

616.3 – …. The crisis in his life has come; everything is at stake. In the darkness and solitude he continues praying and humbling himself before God…. Long has he endured perplexity, remorse, and trouble for his sin; now he must have the assurance that it is pardoned…. *"I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."* What confidence, what firmness and perseverance, are here displayed! Had this been a boastful, presumptuous claim, Jacob would have been instantly destroyed; but his was the assurance of one who confesses his weakness and unworthiness, yet trusts the mercy of a covenant-keeping God.

617.1 – …. Through humiliation, repentance, and self-surrender, this sinful, erring mortal prevailed with the Majesty of heaven. He had fastened his trembling grasp upon the promises of God, and the heart of Infinite Love could not turn away the sinner's plea. As an evidence of his triumph and an encouragement to others to imitate his example, his name was changed from one which was a reminder of his sin, to one that commemorated his victory….

619.1 – Though God's people will be surrounded by enemies who are bent upon their destruction, yet the anguish which they suffer is not a dread of persecution for the truth's sake; they fear that every sin has not been repented of, and that through some fault in themselves they will fail to realize the fulfillment of the Saviour's promise: I *"will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world."* Revelation 3:10. If they could have the assurance of pardon they would not shrink from torture or death; but should they prove unworthy, and lose their lives because of their own defects of character, then God's holy name would be reproached.

619.3 – They afflict their souls before God, pointing to their past repentance of their many sins, and pleading the Saviour's promise: *"Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me."* Isaiah 27:5. Their faith does not fail because their prayers are not immediately answered. Though suffering the keenest anxiety, terror, and distress, they do not cease their intercessions. They lay hold of the strength of God as Jacob laid hold of the Angel; and the language of their souls is: *"I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."*

620.1 – Had not Jacob previously repented of his sin …. God would not have heard his prayer and mercifully preserved his life. So, in the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance.

What is the central issue for God's people during the *"Time of Jacob's Trouble"*?

618.2 – As Satan influenced Esau to march against Jacob, so he will stir up the wicked to destroy God's people in the time of trouble. And as he accused Jacob, he will urge his accusations against the people of God. He numbers the world as his subjects; but the little company who keep the commandments of God are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. He sees that holy angels are guarding them, and he infers that their sins have been pardoned; but he does not know that their cases have been decided in the sanctuary above. He has an accurate knowledge of the sins which he has tempted them to commit, and he presents these before God in the most exaggerated light, representing this people to be just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favor of God. He declares that the Lord cannot in justice forgive their sins and yet destroy him and his angels. He claims them as his prey and demands that they be given into his hands to destroy.

618.3 – As Satan accuses the people of God on account of their sins, the Lord permits him to try them to the uttermost. Their confidence in God, their faith and firmness, will be severely tested. As they review the past,

their hopes sink; for in their whole lives they can see little good. They are fully conscious of their weakness and unworthiness. Satan endeavors to terrify them with the thought that their cases are hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations and turn from their allegiance to God.

How does Satan work to try and destroy the faith of God's people during this time?

What important detail does Satan NOT KNOW?

621.1 – Jacob's history is also an assurance that God will not cast off those who have been deceived and tempted and betrayed into sin, but who have returned unto Him with true repentance. While Satan seeks to destroy this class, God will send His angels to comfort and protect them in the time of peril. The assaults of Satan are fierce and determined, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye is upon His people, and His ear listens to their cries. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but the Refiner will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. God's love for His children during the period of their severest trial is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; their earthliness must be consumed, that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected.

What will the trial of their faith do for the children of God?

4. Read the following GC paragraphs:

620.2 – Satan leads many to believe that God will overlook their unfaithfulness in the minor affairs of life; but the Lord shows in His dealings with Jacob that He will in no wise sanction or tolerate evil. All who endeavor to excuse or conceal their sins, and permit them to remain upon the books of heaven, unconfessed and unforgiven, will be overcome by Satan. The more exalted their profession and the more honorable the position which they hold, the more grievous is their course in the sight of God and the more sure the triumph of their great adversary. Those who delay a preparation for the day of God cannot obtain it in the time of trouble or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless.

620.3 – Those professed Christians who come up to that last fearful conflict unprepared will, in their despair, confess their sins in words of burning anguish, while the wicked exult over their distress. These confessions are of the same character as was that of Esau or of Judas. Those who make them, lament the result of transgression, but not its guilt. They feel no true contrition, no abhorrence of evil. They acknowledge their sin, through fear of punishment; but, like Pharaoh of old, they would return to their defiance of Heaven should the judgments be removed.

What deception of Satan will prove fatal to many?

Why can sins confessed during the time of trouble not be pardoned? (see 613.2)

5. Read Psalm 42; 119:140-154; Matthew 16:24-27; 2 Corinthians 1:20-22; 6:14-7:1; Hebrews 11:13-16, 32-40; 2 Peter 1:2-7; 1 John 1:9; Revelation 7:13-17 and the following GC paragraphs:

621.2 – The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger – a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His victory is an evidence of the power of importunate prayer. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God – how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God.

622.1 – Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God. The lessons of faith which they have neglected they will be forced to learn under a terrible pressure of discouragement.

622.2 – We should now acquaint ourselves with God by proving His promises. Angels record every prayer that is earnest and sincere. We should rather dispense with selfish gratifications than neglect communion with God. The deepest poverty, the greatest self-denial, with His approval, is better than riches, honors, ease, and friendship without it. We must take time to pray. If we allow our minds to be absorbed by worldly interests, the Lord may give us time by removing from us our idols of gold, of houses, or of fertile lands.

622.3 – …. If the messengers who bear the last solemn warning to the world would pray for the blessing of God, not in a cold, listless, lazy manner, but fervently and in faith, as did Jacob, they would find many places where they could say: *"I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."* Genesis 32:30. They would be accounted of heaven as princes, having power to prevail with God and with men.

How should God's people be preparing for the Trouble to come and how will the lessons learned now lessen the trials of that time?

6. Read Matthew 4:1-11; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 6:10-18; Hebrews 12:2-4; 1 John 2:14-18; 5:3-4 and the following GC paragraphs:

622.4 – The *"time of trouble, such as never was,"* is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal. In that time of trial, every soul must stand for himself before God…

623.1 – Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: *"The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me."* John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.

623.2 – It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ. Our precious Saviour invites us to join ourselves to Him, to unite our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits. God's providence is the school in which we are to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus. The Lord is ever setting before us, not the way we would choose, which seems easier and pleasanter to us, but the true aims of life. It rests with us to co-operate with the agencies which Heaven employs in the work of conforming our characters to the divine model. None can neglect or defer this work but at the most fearful peril to their souls.

What does preparation look like?

What condition must be found in all who will stand in the Time of Trouble?

What invitation is extended now?

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What are we responsible for in this process?

7. Read Matthew 24:21-27, 31; 25:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 1:7, 13-15; 12:12 and the following GC paragraphs:

623.3 – … The wrath of Satan increases as his time grows short, and his work of deceit and destruction will reach its culmination in the time of trouble.

624.1 – Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.

What role will Spiritualism play during the Time of Trouble?

624.2 – As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ…. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: *"Christ has come! Christ has come!"* The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the 7th are blaspheming his name by

refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion.

What will be the crowning act in the drama of deception?

625.1-2 – But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God's unmingled wrath shall be poured out…. And, furthermore, Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ's advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming….. This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known--witnessed by the whole world.

Why will none of God's people be misled in this crisis?

What will Satan NOT BE permitted to do?

625.3 – Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only? Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day. He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a heavy, wearisome burden, that their hearts may be overcharged with the cares of this life and the day of trial may come upon them as a thief.

What are Satan's strategies for preventing people from have a saving knowledge of the Bible?

8. Read Joshua 1:9; Psalm 27:1-5; Isaiah 49:13-16; Zechariah 2:8; Acts 16:20-26; Hebrews 13:6 and the following GC paragraphs:

626.1 – As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places…. But many of all nations and of all classes, high and low, rich and poor, black and white, will be cast into the most unjust and cruel bondage. The beloved of God pass weary days, bound in chains, shut in by prison bars, sentenced to be slain, some apparently left to die of starvation in dark and loathsome dungeons. No human ear is open to hear their moans; no human hand is ready to lend them help.

626.2 – Will the Lord forget His people in this trying hour? Did He forget faithful Noah when judgments were visited upon the antediluvian world? Did He forget Lot when the fire came down from heaven to consume the cities of the plain? Did He forget Joseph surrounded by idolaters in Egypt? Did He forget Elijah when the oath of Jezebel threatened him with the fate of the prophets of Baal? Did He forget Jeremiah in the dark and dismal pit of his prison house? Did He forget the three worthies in the fiery furnace? or Daniel in the den of lions?

627.1 – Though enemies may thrust them into prison, yet dungeon walls cannot cut off the communication between their souls and Christ. One who sees their every weakness, who is acquainted with every trial, is above all earthly powers; and angels will come to them in lonely cells, bringing light and peace from heaven. The prison will be as a palace; for the rich in faith dwell there, and the gloomy walls will be lighted up with heavenly light as when Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises at midnight in the Philippian dungeon.

What trials can God's people expect during the *"Time of Trouble"*?

What blessed promises will bring them comfort?

9. Read Exodus 34:6-7; Isaiah 28:21; Ezekiel 33:11; Amos 8:11-12; Habakkuk 3:3-13; Nahum 1:3-8; Revelation 16:2-9 and the following GC paragraphs:

627.2 – God's judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people. His long forbearance with the wicked emboldens men in transgression, but their punishment is nonetheless certain and terrible because it is long delayed…. To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act…... By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord's reluctance to execute justice. The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God's account, will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy.

627.3 – When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people …. Terrible as these inflictions are, God's justice stands fully vindicated.… By condemning the people of God to death, they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood as if it had been shed by their hands.…

628.2 – These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy.

629.1 – In that day, multitudes will desire the shelter of God's mercy which they have so long despised.

What is God's *"strange act"*?

What distinguishes the 7 last plagues from the previous judgments of God?

10. Read Psalm 34:7; 121:5-8; 91; Isaiah 33:15-16; 41:17 and the following GC paragraphs:

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

630.1 – Yet to human sight it will appear that the people of God must soon seal their testimony with their blood as did the martyrs before them. They themselves begin to fear that the Lord has left them to fall by the hand of their enemies. It is a time of fearful agony. Day and night they cry unto God for deliverance. The wicked exult, and the jeering cry is heard: *"Where now is your faith? Why does not God deliver you out of our hands if you are indeed His people?"* But the waiting ones remember Jesus dying upon Calvary's cross and the chief priests and rulers shouting in mockery: *"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. Like Jacob, all are wrestling with God. Their countenances express their internal struggle. Paleness sits upon every face. Yet they cease not their earnest intercession.

630.2 – Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ's patience. With sympathizing tenderness, angels have witnessed their distress and have heard their prayers. They are waiting the word of their Commander to snatch them from their peril. But they must wait yet a little longer. The people of God must drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism. The very delay, so painful to them, is the best answer to their petitions. As they endeavor to wait trustingly for the Lord to work they are led to exercise faith, hope, and patience, which have been too little exercised during their religious experience. Yet for the elect's sake the time of trouble will be shortened…. The end will come more quickly than men expect. The wheat will be gathered and bound in sheaves for the garner of God; the tares will be bound as fagots for the fires of destruction.

631.1 – The heavenly sentinels, faithful to their trust, continue their watch. Though a general decree has fixed the time when commandment keepers may be put to death, their enemies will in some cases anticipate the decree, and before the time specified, will endeavor to take their lives. But none can pass the mighty guardians stationed about every faithful soul. Some are assailed in their flight from the cities and villages; but the swords raised against them break and fall powerless as a straw. Others are defended by angels in the form of men of war.

How will God care for his people during the *"Time of Trouble"*?

What part will heavenly angels play?

11. Read Genesis 19:1-16; 1 Kings 19:3-7; 2 Kings 6:15-17; Daniel 6:20-22; Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:40-43 and the following GC paragraphs:

631.2 – In all ages, God has wrought through holy angels for the succor and deliverance of His people. Celestial beings have taken an active part in the affairs of men. They have appeared clothed in garments that shone as the lightning; they have come as men in the garb of wayfarers. Angels have appeared in human form to men of God. They have rested, as if weary, under the oaks at noon. They have accepted the hospitalities of human homes. They have acted as guides to benighted travelers. They have, with their own hands, kindled the fires at the altar. They have opened prison doors and set free the servants of the Lord. Clothed with the panoply of heaven, they came to roll away the stone from the Saviour's tomb.

631.3 – In the form of men, angels are often in the assemblies of the righteous; and they visit the assemblies of the wicked, as they went to Sodom, to make a record of their deeds, to determine whether they have passed the boundary of God's forbearance. The Lord delights in mercy; and for the sake of a few who really serve Him, He restrains calamities and prolongs the tranquillity of multitudes. Little do sinners against God realize that they are indebted for their own lives to the faithful few whom they delight to ridicule and oppress.

632.1 – Though the rulers of this world know it not, yet often in their councils angels have been spokesmen. Human eyes have looked upon them; human ears have listened to their appeals; human lips have opposed their suggestions and ridiculed their counsels; human hands have met them with insult and abuse. In the council hall and the court of justice these heavenly messengers have shown an intimate acquaintance with human history; they have proved themselves better able to plead the cause of the oppressed than were their ablest and most eloquent defenders. They have defeated purposes and arrested evils that would have greatly retarded the work of God and would have caused great suffering to His people. In the hour of peril and distress…

In what ways have angels worked in the past on behalf of God's people?

How does this reality encourage you?

12. Read Isaiah 51:11-16; Habakkuk 3:17-19; Malachi 3:17-18; Luke 21:28 and the following GC paragraphs:

632.3 – As the wrestling ones urge their petitions before God, the veil separating them from the unseen seems almost withdrawn. The heavens glow with the dawning of eternal day, and like the melody of angel songs the words fall upon the ear: *"Stand fast to your allegiance. Help is coming."* Christ, the almighty Victor, holds out to His weary soldiers a crown of immortal glory; and His voice comes from the gates ajar: *"Lo, I am with you. Be not afraid. I am acquainted with all your sorrows; I have borne your griefs. You are not warring against untried enemies. I have fought the battle in your behalf, and in My name you are more than conquerors."*

633.1 – The precious Saviour will send help just when we need it. The way to heaven is consecrated by His footprints. Every thorn that wounds our feet has wounded His. Every cross that we are called to bear He has borne before us. The Lord permits conflicts, to prepare the soul for peace. The time of trouble is a fearful ordeal for God's people; but it is the time for every true believer to look up, and by faith he may see the bow of promise encircling him.

634.1 – The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity.... Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life.

Discuss

Lesson 35

God's People Delivered

(see chapter 40)

1. Read Exodus 14:13-20; Psalm 46; Isaiah 13:6; Malachi 3:17-18 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

635.1 – When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof.

635.2 – The people of God – some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains – still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men, urged on by hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death. It is now, in the hour of utmost extremity, that the God of Israel will interpose for the deliverance of His chosen...

635.3 – With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God's covenant and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness.

637.2 – Thick clouds still cover the sky; yet the sun now and then breaks through, appearing like the avenging eye of Jehovah. Fierce lightnings leap from the heavens, enveloping the earth in a sheet of flame. Above the terrific roar of thunder, voices, mysterious and awful, declare the doom of the wicked. The words spoken are not comprehended by all; but they are distinctly understood by the false teachers. Those who a little before were so reckless, so boastful and defiant, so exultant in their cruelty to God's commandment-keeping people, are now overwhelmed with consternation and shuddering in fear. Their wails are heard above the sound of the elements. Demons acknowledge the deity of Christ and tremble before His power, while men are supplicating for mercy and groveling in abject terror.

As the wicked prepare to annihilate God's people, what happens?

636.1 – By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, *"Look up,"* and lifting their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise. The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted, and like Stephen they look up steadfastly into heaven and see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne. In His divine form they discern the marks of His humiliation; and from His lips they hear the request presented before His Father and the holy angels: *"I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am."* John 17:24. Again a voice, musical and triumphant, is heard, saying: "They come! they come! holy, harmless, and undefiled. They have kept the word of My patience; they shall walk among the angels;" and the pale, quivering lips of those who have held fast their faith utter a shout of victory.

638.2 – Through a rift in the clouds there beams a star whose brilliancy is increased fourfold in contrast with the darkness. It speaks hope and joy to the faithful, but severity and wrath to the transgressors of God's law. Those who have sacrificed all for Christ are now secure, hidden as in the secret of the Lord's pavilion. They have been tested, and before the world and the despisers of truth they have evinced their fidelity to Him who died for them. A marvelous change has come over those who have held fast their integrity in the very face of death. They have been suddenly delivered from the dark and terrible tyranny of men transformed to demons. Their faces, so lately pale, anxious, and haggard, are now aglow with wonder, faith, and love. Their voices rise in triumphant song….

How is the experience of God's people different?

636.2 – It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: *"It is done."*

636.3 – That voice shakes the heavens and the earth…. The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God… The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world's great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God's people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free.

What effect does God's presence have upon the earth?

637.1 – Graves are opened …. All who have died in the faith of the 3rd angel's message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God's covenant of peace with those who have kept His law…. those that mocked and derided Christ's dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient.

What group of people are raised from the dead to witness Christ's coming?

2. Read Psalm 50:3-4; Isaiah 34:1-4; 62:11; Jeremiah 30:5-7; Habakkuk 3:3-4; Matthew 24:30-31; Revelation 6:14-17; 19:11-16; 22:12 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

639.1 – While these words of holy trust ascend to God, the clouds sweep back, and the starry heavens are seen, unspeakably glorious in contrast with the black and angry firmament on either side. The glory of the celestial city streams from the gates ajar. Then there appears against the sky a hand holding 2 tables of stone folded together.... That holy law, God's righteousness, that amid thunder and flame was proclaimed from Sinai as the guide of life, is now revealed to men as the rule of judgment. The hand opens the tables, and there are seen the precepts of the Decalogue, traced as with a pen of fire. The words are so plain that all can read them. Memory is aroused, the darkness of superstition and heresy is swept from every mind, and God's ten words, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, are presented to the view of all the inhabitants of the earth.

640.3 – Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man. In solemn silence they gaze upon it as it draws nearer the earth, becoming lighter and more glorious, until it is a great white cloud, its base a glory like consuming fire, and above it the rainbow of the covenant. Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror.... With anthems of celestial melody the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng, attend Him on His way..... No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor.... As the living cloud comes still nearer, every eye beholds the Prince of life. No crown of thorns now mars that sacred head; but a diadem of glory rests on His holy brow. His countenance outshines the dazzling brightness of the noonday sun....

As both wicked and righteous watch, what is revealed for all to see?

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

640.1 – The enemies of God's law, from the ministers down to the least among them, have a new conception of truth and duty. Too late they see that the Sabbath of the 4th commandment is the seal of the living God. Too late they see the true nature of their spurious sabbath and the sandy foundation upon which they have been

building. They find that they have been fighting against God. Religious teachers have led souls to perdition while professing to guide them to the gates of Paradise. Not until the day of final accounts will it be known how great is the responsibility of men in holy office and how terrible are the results of their unfaithfulness. Only in eternity can we rightly estimate the loss of a single soul. Fearful will be the doom of him to whom God shall say: Depart, thou wicked servant.

640.2 – The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people. Like peals of loudest thunder His words roll through the earth. The Israel of God stand listening, with their eyes fixed upward. Their countenances are lighted up with His glory, and shine as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked cannot look upon them. And when the blessing is pronounced on those who have honored God by keeping His Sabbath holy, there is a mighty shout of victory.

641.1-2 – Before His presence *"all faces are turned into paleness;"* ….. The angels' song is hushed, and there is a period of awful silence. Then the voice of Jesus is heard, saying: *"My grace is sufficient for you."* The faces of the righteous are lighted up, and joy fills every heart. And the angels strike a note higher and sing again as they draw still nearer to the earth…. The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and every mountain and island is moved out of its place….

642.2 – The derisive jests have ceased. Lying lips are hushed into silence. The clash of arms, the tumult of battle, *"with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood"* (Isaiah 9:5), is stilled. Nought now is heard but the voice of prayer and the sound of weeping and lamentation…. The wicked pray to be buried beneath the rocks of the mountains rather than meet the face of Him whom they have despised and rejected.

How do the wicked respond?

How do the righteous respond?

642.3 – That voice which penetrates the ear of the dead, they know. How often have its plaintive, tender tones called them to repentance. How often has it been heard in the touching entreaties of a friend, a brother, a Redeemer. To the rejecters of His grace no other could be so full of condemnation, so burdened with denunciation, as that voice which has so long pleaded…. That voice awakens memories which they would fain blot out – warnings despised, invitations refused, privileges slighted.

644.1 – In the lives of all who reject truth there are moments when conscience awakens, when memory presents the torturing recollection of a life of hypocrisy and the soul is harassed with vain regrets. But what are these compared with the remorse of that day when "fear cometh as desolation," when "destruction cometh as a whirlwind"! Proverbs 1:27. Those who would have destroyed Christ and His faithful people now witness the glory which rests upon them. In the midst of their terror they hear the voices of the saints in joyful strains exclaiming: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." Isaiah 25:9.

When the wicked hear the voice of Jesus, what happens?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 11:39-40 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

644.2 – Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: *"Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!"* Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory …. And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory.

When the righteous dead hear the voice of Jesus what happens?

644.3 – All come forth from their graves the same in stature as when they entered the tomb. Adam, who stands among the risen throng, is of lofty height and majestic form, in stature but little below the Son of God. He presents a marked contrast to the people of later generations; in this one respect is shown the great degeneracy of the race. But all arise with the freshness and vigor of eternal youth. In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost. He will change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body. The mortal, corruptible form, devoid of comeliness, once polluted with sin, becomes perfect, beautiful, and immortal. All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave. Restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will *"grow up"* (Malachi 4:2) to the full stature of the race in its primeval glory. The last lingering traces of the curse of sin will be removed, and Christ's faithful ones will appear in "the beauty of the Lord our God," in mind and soul and body reflecting the perfect image of their Lord. Oh, wonderful redemption! long talked of, long hoped for, contemplated with eager anticipation, but never fully understood.

What are some interesting details regarding the Redeemed?

645.1 – The living righteous are changed *"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."* At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels *"gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."* Little children are borne by holy angels to their mothers' arms. Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God.

How is the promise of 1st Thessalonians 4 fulfilled?

4. Read Psalm 45; Isaiah 35; 51:8; Matthew 25:34; Hebrews 12:2; Revelation 19:6-7 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

645.3 – Before entering the City of God, the Saviour bestows upon His followers the emblems of victory and invests them with the insignia of their royal state. The glittering ranks are drawn up in the form of a hollow square about their King, whose form rises in majesty high above saint and angel, whose countenance beams upon them full of benignant love. Throughout the unnumbered host of the redeemed every glance is fixed upon Him, every eye beholds His glory.... Upon the heads of the overcomers, Jesus with His own right hand places the crown of glory.... In every hand are placed the victor's palm and the shining harp. Then, as the commanding angels strike the note, every hand sweeps the harp strings with skillful touch, awaking sweet music in rich, melodious strains. Rapture unutterable thrills every heart, and each voice is raised in grateful praise

646.1 – Before the ransomed throng is the Holy City. Jesus opens wide the pearly gates, and the nations that have kept the truth enter in. There they behold the Paradise of God, the home of Adam in his innocence....

646.2 – .... Christ presents to the Father the purchase of His blood, declaring: *"Here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given Me." "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept."* Oh, the wonders of redeeming love! the rapture of that hour when the infinite Father, looking upon the ransomed, shall behold His image, sin's discord banished, its blight removed, and the human once more in harmony with the divine!

647.1 – With unutterable love, Jesus welcomes His faithful ones to the joy of their Lord. The Saviour's joy is in seeing, in the kingdom of glory, the souls that have been saved by His agony and humiliation. And the redeemed will be sharers in His joy, as they behold, among the blessed, those who have been won to Christ through their prayers, their labors, and their loving sacrifice. As they gather about the great white throne, gladness unspeakable will fill their hearts, when they behold those whom they have won for Christ, and see that one has

gained others, and these still others, all brought into the haven of rest, there to lay their crowns at Jesus' feet and praise Him through the endless cycles of eternity.

Describe your personal response to the above.

647.2 – As the ransomed ones are welcomed to the City of God, there rings out upon the air an exultant cry of adoration. The two Adams are about to meet. The Son of God is standing with outstretched arms to receive the father of our race – the being whom He created, who sinned against his Maker, and for whose sin the marks of the crucifixion are borne upon the Saviour's form. As Adam discerns the prints of the cruel nails, he does not fall upon the bosom of his Lord, but in humiliation casts himself at His feet, crying: *"Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain!"* Tenderly the Saviour lifts him up and bids him look once more upon the Eden home from which he has so long been exiled.

647.3 – After his expulsion from Eden, Adam's life on earth was filled with sorrow. Every dying leaf, every victim of sacrifice, every blight upon the fair face of nature, every stain upon man's purity, was a fresh reminder of his sin. Terrible was the agony of remorse as he beheld iniquity abounding, and, in answer to his warnings, met the reproaches cast upon himself as the cause of sin. With patient humility he bore, for nearly a thousand years, the penalty of transgression. Faithfully did he repent of his sin and trust in the merits of the promised Saviour, and he died in the hope of a resurrection. The Son of God redeemed man's failure and fall; and now, through the work of the atonement, Adam is reinstated in his first dominion.

648.1-2 – Transported with joy, he beholds the trees that were once his delight – the very trees whose fruit he himself had gathered in the days of his innocence and joy. He sees the vines that his own hands have trained, the very flowers that he once loved to care for. His mind grasps the reality of the scene; he comprehends that this is indeed Eden restored, more lovely now than when he was banished from it. The Saviour leads him to the tree of life and plucks the glorious fruit and bids him eat. He looks about him and beholds a multitude of his family redeemed, standing in the Paradise of God. Then he casts his glittering crown at the feet of Jesus and, falling upon His breast, embraces the Redeemer. He touches the golden harp, and the vaults of heaven echo the triumphant song: *"Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and lives again!"* The family of Adam take up the strain and cast their crowns at the Saviour's feet as they bow before Him in adoration…. This reunion is witnessed by the angels who wept at the fall of Adam and rejoiced when Jesus, after His resurrection, ascended to heaven, having opened the grave for all who should believe on His name. Now they behold the work of redemption accomplished, and they unite their voices in the song of praise.

Discuss the meeting between Adam and Jesus. Does anything specific stand out to you?

5. Read Exodus 15:1-18; Isaiah 25:8; 61:1-3; Act 5:40-42; Romans 5:1-5; 1 Peter 4:12-16; Revelation 14:1-3; 15:2-4 and the following GC paragraphs:

648.3 – Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire – so resplendent is it with the glory of God – are gathered the company.... With the Lamb upon Mount Zion, *"having the harps of God,"* they stand, the 144,000 that were redeemed from among men; and there is heard, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a great thunder, *"the voice of harpers harping with their harps."* And they sing *"a new song"* before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb – a song of deliverance. None but the 144,000 can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience – an experience such as no other company have ever had. .... they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God's judgments. But they have been delivered ..... They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat, and they themselves have endured suffering, hunger, and thirst. But *"they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."* Revelation 7:14-17.

649.1 – In all ages the Saviour's chosen have been educated and disciplined in the school of trial. They walked in narrow paths on earth; they were purified in the furnace of affliction. For Jesus' sake they endured opposition, hatred, calumny. They followed Him through conflicts sore; they endured self-denial and experienced bitter disappointments. By their own painful experience they learned the evil of sin, its power, its guilt, its woe; and they look upon it with abhorrence. A sense of the infinite sacrifice made for its cure humbles them in their own sight and fills their hearts with gratitude and praise which those who have never fallen cannot appreciate. They love much because they have been forgiven much. Having been partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are fitted to be partakers with Him of His glory.

650.1 – The heirs of God have come from garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains, from deserts, from the caves of the earth, from the caverns of the sea. On earth they were "destitute, afflicted, tormented." Millions went down to the grave loaded with infamy because they steadfastly refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals they were adjudged the vilest of criminals.... Now the decisions of earth are reversed..... They are no longer feeble, afflicted, scattered, and oppressed. Henceforth they are to be ever with the Lord. They stand before the throne clad in richer robes than the most honored of the earth have ever worn. They are crowned with diadems more glorious than were ever placed upon the brow of earthly monarchs. The days of pain and weeping are forever ended. The King of glory has wiped the tears from all faces; every cause of grief has been removed. Amid the waving of palm branches they pour forth a song of praise, clear, sweet, and harmonious; every voice takes up the strain, until the anthem swells through the vaults of heaven: *"Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."* And all the inhabitants of heaven respond in the ascription: *"Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever."* Revelation 7:10, 12.

How does the above inform our understanding of suffering?

6. Read Isaiah 53 and the following GC paragraphs:

651.1 – In this life we can only begin to understand the wonderful theme of redemption. With our finite comprehension we may consider most earnestly the shame and the glory, the life and the death, the justice and the mercy, that meet in the cross; yet with the utmost stretch of our mental powers we fail to grasp its full significance. The length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of redeeming love are but dimly comprehended. The plan of redemption will not be fully understood, even when the ransomed see as they are seen and know as they are known; but through the eternal ages new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind. Though the griefs and pains and temptations of earth are ended and the cause removed, the people of God will ever have a distinct, intelligent knowledge of what their salvation has cost.

651.2 – The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified. Never will it be forgotten that He whose power created and upheld the unnumbered worlds through the vast realms of space, the Beloved of God, the Majesty of heaven, He whom cherub and shining seraph delighted to adore – humbled Himself to uplift fallen man; that He bore the guilt and shame of sin, and the hiding of His Father's face, till the woes of a lost world broke His heart and crushed out His life on Calvary's cross. That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside His glory and humiliate Himself from love to man will ever excite the wonder and adoration of the universe. As the nations of the saved look upon their Redeemer and behold the eternal glory of the Father shining in His countenance; as they behold His throne, which is from everlasting to everlasting, and know that His kingdom is to have no end, they break forth in rapturous song: *"Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His own most precious blood!"*

652.1 – The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power. While we behold the majesty of His throne, high and lifted up, we see His character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title, *"Our Father."*

Discuss the how the cross will be *"the science and song"* of the Redeemed.

Lesson 36

Desolation of the Earth

(see chapter 41)

1. Read Revelation 18:1-17 and the following GC Paragraphs:

653.3 – Such are the judgments that fall upon Babylon in the day of the visitation of God's wrath. She has filled up the measure of her iniquity; her time has come; she is ripe for destruction.

654.1 – … While probation continued they were blinded by Satan's deceptions, and they justified their course of sin. The rich prided themselves upon their superiority to those who were less favored; but they had obtained their riches by violation of the law of God. They had neglected to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to deal justly, and to love mercy. They had sought to exalt themselves and to obtain the homage of their fellow creatures. Now they are stripped of all that made them great and are left destitute and defenseless. They look with terror upon the destruction of the idols which they preferred before their Maker. They have sold their souls for earthly riches and enjoyments, and have not sought to become rich toward God. The result is, their lives are a failure; their pleasures are now turned to gall, their treasures to corruption. The gain of a lifetime is swept away in a moment. The rich bemoan the destruction of their grand houses, the scattering of their gold and silver. But their lamentations are silenced by the fear that they themselves are to perish with their idols.

654.2 – The wicked are filled with regret, not because of their sinful neglect of God and their fellow men, but because God has conquered. They lament that the result is what it is; but they do not repent of their wickedness. They would leave no means untried to conquer if they could.

As the wicked experience the judgments of God, what is their response and how is it different from genuine repentance?

2. Read Jeremiah 8:11; 23:1-2; 25:34-35; Ezekiel 13:22 and the following GC paragraphs:

654.4 – The minister who has sacrificed truth to gain the favor of men now discerns the character and influence of his teachings. It is apparent that the omniscient eye was following him as he stood in the desk, as he walked the streets, as he mingled with men in the various scenes of life. Every emotion of the soul, every line written, every word uttered, every act that led men to rest in a refuge of falsehood, has been scattering seed; and now, in the wretched, lost souls around him, he beholds the harvest.

655.3 – Ministers and people see that they have not sustained the right relation to God. They see that they have rebelled against the Author of all just and righteous law. The setting aside of the divine precepts gave rise to thousands of springs of evil, discord, hatred, iniquity, until the earth became one vast field of strife, one sink of corruption. This is the view that now appears to those who rejected truth and chose to cherish error. No language can express the longing which the disobedient and disloyal feel for that which they have lost forever –

eternal life. Men whom the world has worshiped for their talents and eloquence now see these things in their true light. They realize what they have forfeited by transgression, and they fall at the feet of those whose fidelity they have despised and derided, and confess that God has loved them.

655.4 – The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. "We are lost!" they cry, "and you are the cause of our ruin;" and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. The swords which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed.

Discuss the fate of the false shepherds.

3. Read Isaiah 24:1, 3, 5, 6; 26:21; Jeremiah 25:30-33 and the following GC paragraphs:

656.1 – … For 6,000 thousand years the great controversy has been in progress; the Son of God and His heavenly messengers have been in conflict with the power of the evil one, to warn, enlighten, and save the children of men. Now all have made their decisions; the wicked have fully united with Satan in his warfare against God. The time has come for God to vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. Now the controversy is not alone with Satan, but with men….

656.2-3 – …. Now the angel of death goes forth, represented in Ezekiel's vision by the men with the slaughtering weapons, to whom the command is given …. The work of destruction begins among those who have professed to be the spiritual guardians of the people. The false watchmen are the first to fall. There are none to pity or to spare. Men, women, maidens, and little children perish together….. In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God's unmingled wrath, fall the wicked inhabitants of the earth--priests, rulers, and people, rich and poor, high and low….

657.1 – At the coming of Christ the wicked are blotted from the face of the whole earth – consumed with the spirit of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His glory. Christ takes His people to the City of God, and the earth is emptied of its inhabitants….

Discuss the fate of the wicked.

4. Read Leviticus 16:21-22; Isaiah 14:12-17; Jeremiah 4:23-26; Revelation 20:1-6 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

657.2 – The whole earth appears like a desolate wilderness. The ruins of cities and villages destroyed by the earthquake, uprooted trees, ragged rocks thrown out by the sea or torn out of the earth itself, are scattered over its surface, while vast caverns mark the spot where the mountains have been rent from their foundations.

658.1 – Now the event takes place foreshadowed in the last solemn service of the Day of Atonement…. In like manner, when the work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary has been completed, then in the presence of God and heavenly angels and the hosts of the redeemed the sins of God's people will be placed upon Satan; he will be declared guilty of all the evil which he has caused them to commit. And as the scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, so Satan will be banished to the desolate earth, an uninhabited and dreary wilderness.

To what condition is the earth reduced?

659.1, 660.1 – Here is to be the home of Satan with his evil angels for a thousand years. Limited to the earth, he will not have access to other worlds to tempt and annoy those who have never fallen. It is in this sense that he is bound: there are none remaining, upon whom he can exercise his power. He is wholly cut off from the work of deception and ruin which for so many centuries has been his sole delight…. Even the wicked are now placed beyond the power of Satan, and alone with his evil angels he remains to realize the effect of the curse which sin has brought….

660.2 – For a 1,000 years, Satan will wander to and fro in the desolate earth to behold the results of his rebellion against the law of God. During this time his sufferings are intense. Since his fall his life of unceasing activity has banished reflection; but he is now deprived of his power and left to contemplate the part which he has acted since first he rebelled against the government of heaven, and to look forward with trembling and terror to the dreadful future when he must suffer for all the evil that he has done and be punished for the sins that he has caused to be committed.

How will Satan and his angels spend their time?

660.3-4 – To God's people the captivity of Satan will bring gladness and rejoicing…. During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place…. At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God…. In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death.

661.1-2 – Satan also and evil angels are judged by Christ and His people…. At the close of the thousand years the second resurrection will take place. Then the wicked will be raised from the dead and appear before God for the execution of "the judgment written."

How will the Redeemed spend their time?

Why is this time especially important for the Redeemed?

Lesson 37

The Controversy Ended

(see chapter 42)

1. Read Revelation 20:7-9 and the following GC paragraphs:

662.1 – At the close of the thousand years, Christ again returns to the earth. He is accompanied by the host of the redeemed and attended by a retinue of angels. As He descends in terrific majesty He bids the wicked dead arise to receive their doom. They come forth, a mighty host, numberless as the sands of the sea. What a contrast to those who were raised at the first resurrection! The righteous were clothed with immortal youth and beauty. The wicked bear the traces of disease and death.

662.2 – Every eye in that vast multitude is turned to behold the glory of the Son of God. With one voice the wicked hosts exclaim: *"Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"* It is not love to Jesus that inspires this utterance. The force of truth urges the words from unwilling lips. As the wicked went into their graves, so they come forth with the same enmity to Christ and the same spirit of rebellion. They are to have no new probation in which to remedy the defects of their past lives. Nothing would be gained by this. A lifetime of transgression has not softened their hearts. A 2nd probation, were it given them, would be occupied as was the 1st in evading the requirements of God and exciting rebellion against Him.

Universalists promote the doctrine that all people will eventually be saved – if given enough time. How does the above contradict that belief and why would a 2nd (3rd, 4th, 5th, etc.) probation yield the same results?

Christ descends upon the Mount of Olives.... As the New Jerusalem, in its dazzling splendor, comes down out of heaven, it rests upon the place purified and made ready to receive it, and Christ, with His people and the angels, enters the Holy City.

2. Read the GC paragraphs:

663.1 – Now Satan prepares for a last mighty struggle for the supremacy. While deprived of his power and cut off from his work of deception, the prince of evil was miserable and dejected; but as the wicked dead are raised and he sees the vast multitudes upon his side, his hopes revive.... He will marshal all the armies of the lost under his banner and through them endeavor to execute his plans.... Yet, true to his early cunning, he does not acknowledge himself to be Satan. He claims to be the prince who is the rightful owner of the world and whose inheritance has been unlawfully wrested from him. He represents himself to his deluded subjects as a redeemer, assuring them that his power has brought them forth from their graves and that he is about to rescue them from the most cruel tyranny.... He proposes to lead them against the camp of the saints and to take possession of the City of God. With fiendish exultation he points to the unnumbered millions who have been raised from the dead and declares that as their leader he is well able to overthrow the city and regain his throne and his kingdom.

664.1 – In that vast throng are multitudes of the long-lived race that existed before the Flood; men of lofty stature and giant intellect, who, yielding to the control of fallen angels, devoted all their skill and knowledge to the exaltation of themselves; men whose wonderful works of art led the world to idolize their genius, but whose cruelty and evil inventions, defiling the earth and defacing the image of God, caused Him to blot them from the face of His creation. There are kings and generals who conquered nations, valiant men who never lost a battle, proud, ambitious warriors whose approach made kingdoms tremble. In death these experienced no change. As they come up from the grave, they resume the current of their thoughts just where it ceased….

664.2 – Satan consults with his angels, and then with these kings and conquerors and mighty men. They look upon the strength and numbers on their side, and declare that the army within the city is small in comparison with theirs, and that it can be overcome. They lay their plans to take possession of the riches and glory of the New Jerusalem. All immediately begin to prepare for battle….

664.3 – At last the order to advance is given – an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader. With military precision they advance over the earth's broken and uneven surface to the City of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.

Now that the 1000 years are over, what does Satan now hope to accomplish?

What claims does he make to justify his plan?

What factors contribute to the seemed success of his plan?

3. Read 2 Timothy 4:7-8; Revelation 7:9-12 and the following GC paragraphs:

665.1 – Now Christ again appears to the view of His enemies. Far above the city, upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this throne sits the Son of God, and around Him are the subjects of His kingdom. The power and majesty of Christ no language can describe, no pen portray. The glory of the Eternal Father is enshrouding His Son. The brightness of His presence fills the City of God, and flows out beyond the gates, flooding the whole earth with its radiance.

665.2 – Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan, but who, plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Saviour with deep, intense devotion. Next are those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void, and the millions, of all ages, who were martyred for their faith. And beyond is the *"great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues",* . . . Their warfare is ended, their victory won. They have run the race and reached the prize. The palm branch in their hands is a symbol of their triumph, the white robe an emblem of the spotless righteousness of Christ which now is theirs.

665.3 – The redeemed raise a song of praise that echoes and re-echoes through the vaults of heaven.... And angel and seraph unite their voices in adoration. As the redeemed have beheld the power and malignity of Satan, they have seen, as never before, that no power but that of Christ could have made them conquerors. In all that shining throng there are none to ascribe salvation to themselves, as if they had prevailed by their own power and goodness. Nothing is said of what they have done or suffered; but the burden of every song, the keynote of every anthem, is: Salvation to our God and unto the Lamb.

As Satan and his army approach the City of God, what do they see?

What is the foundational truth that prompts the redeemed to sing, *"Salvation to our God and unto the Lamb"*?

4. Read Genesis 3:1-5; Romans 6:23a; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:5; Philippians 2:6-11; Revelation 20:11-13; 21:8 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

666.1 – In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and heaven the final coronation of the Son of God takes place. And now, invested with supreme majesty and power, the King of kings pronounces sentence upon the rebels against His government and executes justice upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people.

What ceremony takes place in the sight of all?

666.2 – As soon as the books of record are opened, and the eye of Jesus looks upon the wicked, they are conscious of every sin which they have ever committed. They see just where their feet diverged from the path of purity and holiness, just how far pride and rebellion have carried them in the violation of the law of God. The seductive temptations which they encouraged by indulgence in sin, the blessings perverted, the messengers of God despised, the warnings rejected, the waves of mercy beaten back by the stubborn, unrepentant heart--all appear as if written in letters of fire.

666.3, 667.1 – 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; His betrayal into the hands of the murderous mob; the fearful events of that night of horror--the unresisting prisoner, forsaken by His best-loved disciples, rudely hurried through the streets of Jerusalem; the Son of God exultingly displayed before Annas, arraigned in the high priest's palace, in the judgment hall of Pilate, before the cowardly and cruel Herod, mocked, insulted, tortured, and condemned to die – all are vividly portrayed – the patient Sufferer treading the path to Calvary; the Prince of heaven hanging upon the cross; the haughty priests and the jeering rabble deriding His expiring agony; the supernatural darkness; the heaving earth, the rent rocks, the open graves, marking the moment when the world's Redeemer yielded up His life.

667.2 – The awful spectacle appears just as it was. Satan, his angels, and his subjects have no power to turn from the picture of their own work. Each actor recalls the part which he performed. Herod, who slew the innocent children of Bethlehem that he might destroy the King of Israel; the base Herodias, upon whose guilty soul rests the blood of John the Baptist; the weak, timeserving Pilate; the mocking soldiers; the priests and rulers and the maddened throng who cried, "His blood be on us, and on our children!" – all behold the enormity of their guilt. They vainly seek to hide from the divine majesty of His countenance, outshining the glory of the sun, while the redeemed cast their crowns at the Saviour's feet, exclaiming: *"He died for me!"*

How are the wicked made to realize that the judgment they are about to face is just?

How do the wicked respond?

How do the righteous respond?

668.3 – It is now evident to all that the wages of sin is not noble independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, and death. The wicked see what they have forfeited by their life of rebellion. The far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory was despised when offered them; but how desirable it now appears. *"All this," cries the lost soul, "I might have had; but I chose to put these things far from me. Oh, strange infatuation! I have exchanged peace, happiness, and honor for wretchedness, infamy, and despair."* All see that their exclusion from heaven is just. By their lives they have declared: *"We will not have this Man [Jesus] to reign over us."*

668.4 – As if entranced, the wicked have looked upon the coronation of the Son of God. They see in His hands the tables of the divine law, the statutes which they have despised and transgressed. They witness the outburst of wonder, rapture, and adoration from the saved; and as the wave of melody sweeps over the multitudes without the city, all with one voice exclaim, *"Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints"* (Revelation 15:3); and, falling prostrate, they worship the Prince of life.

How does Satan's lie of Genesis 3 become evident to the wicked as they stand before the Throne of Jesus?

How is Philippians 2:6-11 fulfilled?

The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them.

…. Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy has now been made plain. The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The working out of Satan's rule in contrast with the government of God has been presented to the whole universe. Satan's own works have condemned him. God's wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated. It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created…. The history of sin will stand to all eternity as a witness that with the existence of God's law is bound up the happiness of all the beings He has created. With all the facts of the great controversy in view, the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord declare: *"Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints."*

5. Read Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:6-8, 12-19; John 8:44; 2 Peter 5:8 and the following GC paragraphs – answer the questions:

669.1 – Satan seems paralyzed as he beholds the glory and majesty of Christ. He who was once a covering cherub remembers whence he has fallen. A shining seraph, *"son of the morning;"* how changed, how degraded! From the council where once he was honored, he is forever excluded. He sees another now standing near to the Father, veiling His glory. He has seen the crown placed upon the head of Christ by an angel of lofty stature and majestic presence, and he knows that the exalted position of this angel might have been his.

669.2 – Memory recalls the home of his innocence and purity, the peace and content that were his until he indulged in murmuring against God, and envy of Christ. His accusations, his rebellion, his deceptions to gain the sympathy and support of the angels, his stubborn persistence in making no effort for self-recovery when God would have granted him forgiveness – all come vividly before him.... He sees that his hellish plots have been powerless to destroy those who have put their trust in Jesus. As Satan looks upon his kingdom, the fruit of his toil, he sees only failure and ruin. He has led the multitudes to believe that the City of God would be an easy prey; but he knows that this is false. Again and again, in the progress of the great controversy, he has been defeated and compelled to yield. He knows too well the power and majesty of the Eternal.

As Satan witnesses the Coronation of Christ, what scenes are brought to his mind?

670.1 – The aim of the great rebel has ever been to justify himself and to prove the divine government responsible for the rebellion. To this end he has bent all the power of his giant intellect. He has worked deliberately and systematically, and with marvelous success, leading vast multitudes to accept his version of the great controversy which has been so long in progress. For thousands of years this chief of conspiracy has palmed off falsehood for truth. But the time has now come when the rebellion is to be finally defeated and the history and character of Satan disclosed. In his last great effort to dethrone Christ, destroy His people, and take possession of the City of God, the archdeceiver has been fully unmasked. Those who have united with him see the total failure of his cause. Christ's followers and the loyal angels behold the full extent of his machinations against the government of God. He is the object of universal abhorrence.

What has been Satan's aim?

How has he worked and what were the results?

At what point is Satan fully unmasked to the wicked, Christ's followers and even loyal angels?

670.2 – Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. He has trained his powers to war against God; the purity, peace, and harmony of heaven would be to him supreme torture. His accusations against the mercy and justice of God are now silenced. The reproach which he has endeavored to cast upon Jehovah rests wholly upon himself. And now Satan bows down and confesses the justice of his sentence.

671.2 – Notwithstanding that Satan has been constrained to acknowledge God's justice and to bow to the supremacy of Christ, his character remains unchanged. The spirit of rebellion, like a mighty torrent, again bursts forth. Filled with frenzy, he determines not to yield the great controversy. The time has come for a last desperate struggle against the King of heaven. He rushes into the midst of his subjects and endeavors to inspire them with his own fury and arouse them to instant battle. But of all the countless millions whom he has allured into rebellion, there are none now to acknowledge his supremacy. His power is at an end. The wicked are filled with the same hatred of God that inspires Satan; but they see that their case is hopeless, that they cannot prevail against Jehovah. Their rage is kindled against Satan and those who have been his agents in deception, and with the fury of demons they turn upon them.

Despite his confession, what does Satan do that proves his character is unchanged?

How do the wicked respond to his final attempt to lead them?

6. Read Psalm 11:6; Jeremaih 17:10; Malachi 4:1; Revelation 19:6; 20:9-15 and the following GC paragraphs:

672.2 – …. Fire comes down from God out of heaven. The earth is broken up. The weapons concealed in its depths are drawn forth. Devouring flames burst from every yawning chasm. The very rocks are on fire. The day has come that shall burn as an oven. The elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein are burned up. The earth's surface seems one molten mass – a vast, seething lake of fire. It is the time of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men….

673.1 – The wicked receive their recompense in the earth…. Some are destroyed as in a moment, while others suffer many days. All are punished *"according to their deeds."* The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God's people to commit. His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived. After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are at last destroyed, root and branch – Satan the root, his followers the branches. The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah.

673.2 – Satan's work of ruin is forever ended…. Now God's creatures are forever delivered from his presence and temptations…. And a shout of praise and triumph ascends from the whole loyal universe.

673.3 – While the earth was wrapped in the fire of destruction, the righteous abode safely in the Holy City. Upon those that had part in the first resurrection, the second death has no power.

674.1 – …. The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept away. No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin.

What is the final outcome for Satan and the wicked?

Is this fire eternal?

Are the results eternal?

Why is it important that we understand the difference?

One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought…. And the tokens of His humiliation are His highest honor; through the eternal ages the wounds of Calvary will show forth His praise and declare His power.

7. Read Psalm 23; 37:29; Isaiah 11:1-10; 45:18; 55:13; 60:18-21; John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:9; 13:12; Hebrews 11:14-16; Revelation 21:1-7, 9-27 and the following GC paragraphs – Discuss each section:

674.3 – …. The time has come to which holy men have looked with longing since the flaming sword barred the first pair from Eden…. The earth originally given to man as his kingdom, betrayed by him into the hands of Satan, and so long held by the mighty foe, has been brought back by the great plan of redemption. All that was lost by sin has been restored…. God's original purpose in the creation of the earth is fulfilled as it is made the eternal abode of the redeemed….

674.4 – A fear of making the future inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon it as our home. Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them in the Father's house. Those who accept the teachings of God's word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. And yet… 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.

675.1 – In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called *"a country."* There the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations. There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home.

Discuss

676.4 – The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son…. We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence and behold the glory of His countenance.

677.1 – There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known….

Discuss

677.2 – There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

677.3 – All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar – worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation – suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.

678.1 – And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.

Discuss

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.