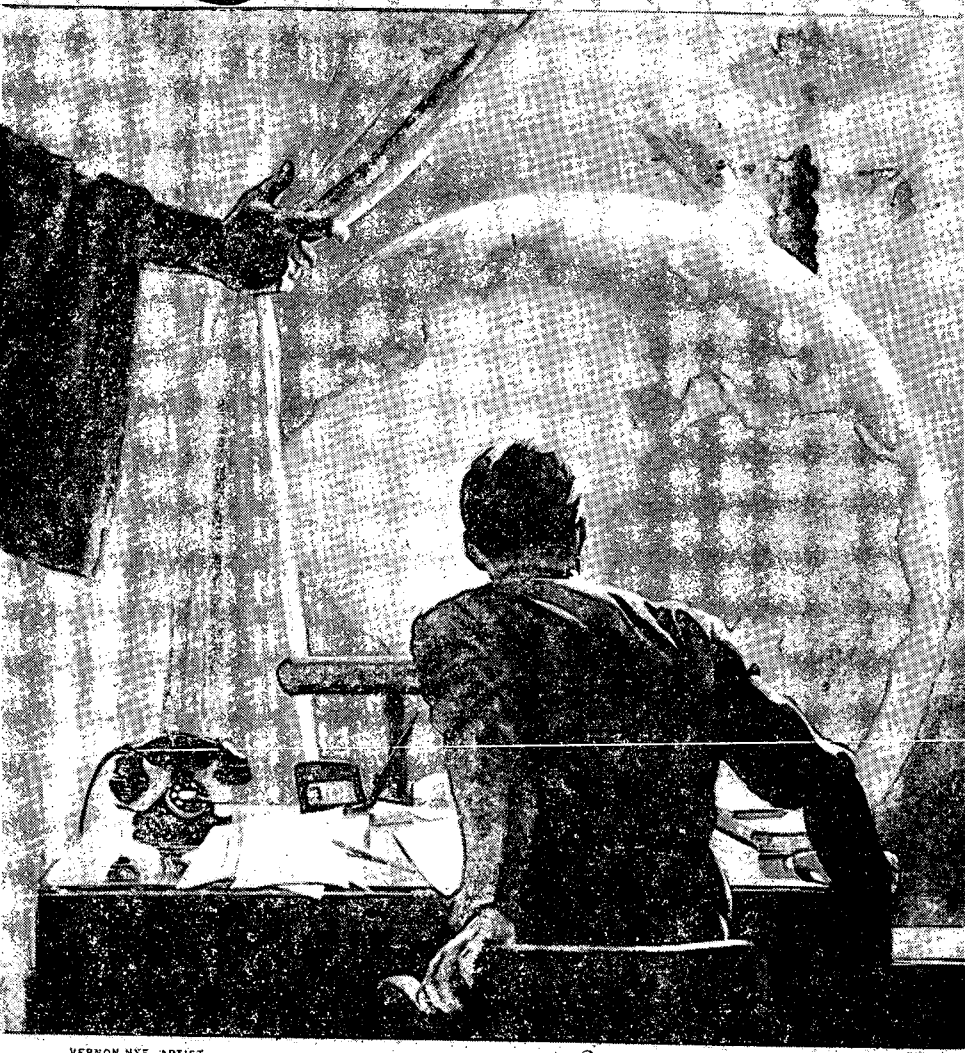
SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON QUARTERLY



VERNON NYE, ARTIST

© 1949, REVIEW AND HERALD PUBLISHING ASSN.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

SENIOR DIVISION, NO. 263, FIRST QUARTER, 1961

THE BLESSING OF DAILY STUDY

"The beauty and riches of the word have a transforming influence on mind and character."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 132.

"There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen in these times."—*Steps to Christ,* page 90.

"The more you search the Scriptures with humble hearts, the greater will be your interest. . . . Every day you should learn something new from the Scriptures."—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 266.

My Daily Lesson Study Pledge

As one who greatly desires to improve his knowledge of the Scriptures, I pledge myself to the careful and prayerful study of some portion of my Sabbath school lesson each day of the week.

Name .....

LESSON TITLES FOR THE QUARTER

1. God's Warnings in the Past
2. History's Coming Climax
3. Signs Promised by Christ—In the Heavens
4. Signs Promised by Christ—In the Earth
5. Signs in Social Life
6. The Spread of Spiritism
7. Counterfeit Signs
8. The Last Great Sign
9. How Near Is the End?
10. The Church and Fulfilling Signs
11. Preparation for His Coming
12. The New World Order

Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly, No. 263, January-March, 1961. 20 cents a single copy, 75 cents a year (four issues); no additional charge to countries requiring extra postage. Published in the U.S.A. by Pacific Press Publishing Association (a corporation of S.D.A.), 1350 Villa Street, Mountain View, California. Second-class mail privileges authorized at Mountain View, California. When a change of address is desired, please be sure to send both old and new addresses.

Copyright, 1960, by Pacific Press Publishing Association
Printed in U.S.A.

Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Lesson 1, for January 7, 1961

God's Warnings in the Past

MEMORY VERSE: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7.

STUDY HELPS: "The Great Controversy," chapter 38; A. S. Maxwell, "Your Bible and You," pages 401-413; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of December 22, 1960.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-7; begin reading from Study Helps.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-12.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 13, 14; read further from Study Helps.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading Study Helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. God and the Future

1. His omniscience. Isa. 45:21.
2. His knowledge of secrets. Dan. 2:22, 28.

II. God and the Nations

3. His power over nations. Isa. 40:15-17.
4. His control of world affairs. Dan. 4:17.

III. God's Hand in History

5. His intervention at the Flood. Gen. 6:5-7.
6. His retribution on Sodom and Gomorrah. Gen. 19:24, 25.
7. His judgment on Babylon. Dan. 5:30, 31.

IV. God's Warnings of Yesterday

8. To Noah and the antediluvians. Gen. 6:3, 13, 14; 7:1-4.
9. To Lot and the Sodomites. Gen. 19:1, 12-17.
10. To the people of Nineveh. Jonah 3:1-4.
11. To the kingdom of Babylon. Dan. 2:38 (last part), 39.
12. To the inhabitants of Tyre. Ezek. 26:1-5.

V. God's Admonition Now

13. Coming judgment upon the world. 2 Peter 3:10.
14. Divine counsel to us. Rev. 14:6, 7.

THE LESSON

Introduction

God is profoundly interested in this world and all who live upon it. He had a beneficent purpose in creating it, and the depth of His concern for its inhabitants is evidenced by His redeeming sacrifice on their behalf. Consequently, His hand has ever been on the helm of history, guiding, unseen, the affairs of men. Again and again He has intervened in judgment upon the wicked, but never without due warning and promises of deliverance for the repentant. In this, as the final judgment approaches, the past holds a vital lesson for today.

God and the Future

1. In what language does Inspiration declare the infinite knowledge of God? Isa. 45:21.

2. How far-reaching is God's knowledge? Dan. 2:22, 28.

NOTE.—"He knoweth what is in the darkness." That is, in those places that are dark to human minds. He can see where we are blind. His vision is unrestricted. Hence His perfect knowledge of all matters that appear beclouded to us. Deut. 29:29. Even the most "top secret" affairs, such as the future of nations and of the world itself, are fully known to Him.

God and the Nations

3. As compared with the power of God, how insignificant is the power of the mightiest nations of earth? Isa. 40:15-17.

NOTE.—"In the days of Isaiah, Assyria was the greatest nation of the earth, feared by all others. But the Lord would have His people know that this greatest nation was as nothing before Him. When men fear God they need have no fear of the so-called great powers of the earth. Regardless of the plans and purposes of men, God brings His own will to pass."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Isa. 40:15.

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

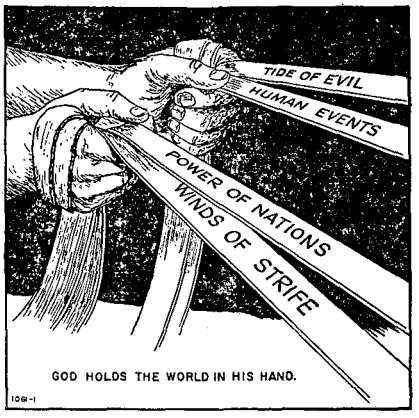
4. How thorough and complete is God's control of world affairs? Dan. 4:17.

NOTE.—"In the affairs of nations God is ever 'silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will' (Ed 173). At times, as with the call of Abraham, He ordains a series of events designed to demonstrate the wisdom of His ways. Again, as in the antediluvian world, He permits evil to run its course and provide an example of the folly of opposition to right principles. But eventually, as in the deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt, He intervenes lest the forces of evil overcome His agencies for the salvation of the world. Whether God ordains, permits, or intervenes, 'the complicated play of human events is under divine control' and an 'overruling purpose has manifestly been at work throughout the ages' (PK 536, 535; see Ed 174; Rom. 13:1)."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Dan. 4:17.

God's Hand in History

5. What divine intervention became necessary as a result of the wickedness of the antediluvians? Gen. 6:5-7.

NOTE.—"The world was in its infancy; yet iniquity had become so deep and widespread that God could no longer bear with it; and He said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth.'



He declared that His Spirit should not always strive with the guilty race. If they did not cease to pollute with their sins the world and its rich treasures, He would blot them from His creation, and would destroy the things with which He had delighted to bless them; He would sweep away the beasts of the field, and the vegetation which furnished such an abundant supply of food, and would transform the fair earth into one vast scene of desolation and ruin."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 92.

The Bible gives several instances of divine intervention in human affairs after the Fall, of which this is the first. It would appear that there are limits to God's forbearance and that occasions arise from time to time which cause Him to say, "Thus far and no farther."

6. What divine retribution fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah? Gen. 19:24, 25.

7. What sudden fate befell the kingdom of Babylon? Dan. 5:30, 31.

God's Warnings of Yesterday

8. How fully did God warn the antediluvians of the approaching Flood? Gen. 6:3, 13, 14; 7:1-4.

NOTE.—"Amid the prevailing corruption, Methuselah, Noah, and many others labored to keep alive the knowledge of the true God and to stay the tide of moral evil. A hundred and twenty years before the Flood, the Lord by a holy angel declared to Noah His purpose, and directed him to build an ark. While building the ark he was to preach that God would bring a flood of water upon the earth to destroy the wicked. Those who would believe the message, and would prepare for that event by repentance and reformation, should find pardon and be saved. Enoch had repeated to his children what God had shown him in regard to the Flood, and Methuselah and his sons, who lived to hear the preaching of Noah, assisted in building the ark."

"Many at first appeared to receive the warning; yet they did not turn to God with true repentance. They were unwilling to renounce their sins. During the time that elapsed before the coming of the Flood, their faith was tested, and they failed to endure the trial. Overcome by the prevailing unbelief, they finally joined their former associates in rejecting the solemn message. Some were deeply convicted, and would have heeded the words of warning; but there were so many to jest and ridicule, that they partook of the same spirit, resisted the invitations of mercy, and were soon among the boldest and most defiant scoffers; for none are so reckless and go to such lengths in sin as do those who have once had light, but have resisted the convicting Spirit of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* pages 92, 95.

9. In what way were Sodom and Gomorrah warned of impending doom? Gen. 19:1, 12-17.

NOTE.—"Abraham was not a stranger to the people of Sodom, and his worship of the unseen God had been a matter of ridicule among them; but his victory over greatly superior forces, and his magnanimous disposition of the prisoners and spoil, excited wonder and admiration. While his skill and valor were extolled, none could avoid the conviction that a divine power had made him conqueror. And his noble and unselfish spirit, so foreign to the self-seeking inhabitants of Sodom, was another evidence of the superiority of the religion which he had honored by his courage and fidelity.

"Melchizedek, in bestowing the benediction upon Abraham, had acknowledged Jehovah as the source of his strength and the author of the victory: 'Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.' Genesis 14:19, 20. God was speaking to that people by His providence, but the last ray of light was rejected as all before had been."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 157.

10. What message did God send to the people of Nineveh? Jonah 3:1-4.

11. What prediction did Daniel make concerning the fate of Babylon? Dan. 2:38 (last part), 39.

NOTE.—Daniel became the divine mouthpiece to proclaim the solemn tidings of the fate of Babylon to a succession of emperors. From the day of his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's first dream to his translation of the mystic symbols on the wall of Belshazzar's palace, he witnessed consistently that the nation's days were numbered. Weighed in the balances of divine justice, he said it had been found "wanting." Having totally misused its unlimited opportunities as a world power, it had become intolerable to God and must in consequence give place to another.

12. What prophecy did the Lord give Judah concerning Tyre? Ezek. 26:1-5.

NOTE.—"Tyre was a powerful commercial city composed of Old Tyre, situated on the mainland, and New Tyre, built on a rocky island some 140 acres in area about a half mile from the shore. . . . When Alexander besieged New Tyre, he built a causeway from the mainland to the island and used the stones and rubble from Old Tyre as material for it. . . . The site of ancient Tyre is still used by fishermen for drying their nets."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Ezek. 26:2, 4, 5.

God's Admonition Now

13. What fate is in store for our world? 2 Peter 3:10.

NOTE.—"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. Malachi 4:1; 2 Peter 3:10. 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—'the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.' "—*The Great Controversy,* pages 672, 673.

14. What warning does God give the present generation? Rev. 14:6, 7.

NOTE.—"It is God's purpose that the truth for this time shall be made known to every kindred and nation and tongue and people. In the world today men and women are absorbed in the search for worldly gain and worldly pleasure. There are thousands upon thousands who give no time or thought to the salvation of the soul. The time has come when the message of Christ's soon coming is to sound throughout the world."—*Testimonies,* vol. 9, p. 24.

By radio, television, printing press, personal evangelism, and many other means, this last warning message is being proclaimed to all mankind. The proclamation of this message is the basic purpose of the great second advent movement.

Questions for Meditation

1. What do God's warnings mean to me personally?
2. What indications are there in my life that I am responding to God's saving message today?
3. Am I as zealous as I should be in making known the final invitation of divine mercy to my friends and neighbors?

Lesson 2, for January 14, 1961

History's Coming Climax

MEMORY VERSE: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." 1 Thess. 4:16.

STUDY HELPS: "The Desire of Ages," chapter 69; "Your Bible and You," pages 415-429; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of December 29, 1960.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-8.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 9, 10; begin reading Study Helps.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 11-14.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading Study Helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. God's Purpose and Plan

1. For the earth in the beginning. Gen. 1:31.
2. For the earth in the future. 2 Peter 3:12, 13.

II. The Coming Climax—A Familiar Truth

3. Knowledge of the event from the beginning. Acts 3:20, 21.
4. Enoch's message concerning. Jude 14.

III. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

5. The dream and its conclusion. Dan. 2:31-35.
6. The stone that fills the earth. Dan. 2: 44, 45.

IV. Daniel's Vision

7. Promise of victory. Dan. 7:17, 18, 27.
8. Christ's coming essential to fulfillment. Matt. 25:31, 34.

V. Promises in the Book of Revelation

9. The certainty of the end. Rev. 10:5-7.
10. Assurance of Christ's return. Rev. 22:6, 7, 20.

VI. Climax of the Controversy Between Good and Evil

11. Time of trouble to precede. Dan. 12:1.
12. Righteous dead to be raised. 1 Thess. 4:16.
13. Edenic happiness to be restored. Rev. 21:4, 5.
14. Invitation to partake of the "water of life." Rev. 22:17.

THE LESSON

Introduction

"The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures. From the day when the first pair turned their sorrowing steps from Eden, the children of faith have waited the coming of the Promised One to break the destroyer's

power and bring them again to the lost Paradise. Holy men of old looked forward to the advent of the Messiah in glory, as the consummation of their hope."—*The Great Controversy,* page 299.

God's Purpose and Plan

1. What was the condition of the earth at the end of creation? Gen. 1:31.

NOTE.—"When the earth was created, it was holy and beautiful. God pronounced it very good. Every flower, every shrub, every tree, answered the purpose of its Creator. Everything upon which the eye rested was lovely and filled the mind with thoughts of the love of God."—*Testimonies,* vol. 7, p. 87.

2. What is God's plan for the earth in the future? 2 Peter 3:12, 13.

NOTE.—This world, once perfect, from the hand of God, has been terribly marred by sin. We are instructed to look for a new heaven and a new earth. The word "new" used here, as also in Revelation 21:1, is *kainos,* meaning new "in point of quality," rather than *neos,* which would be new "in point of time." See W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words,* pages 109, 110. Peter looked forward to a world cleansed by fire and remade by God's creative power.

The Coming Climax—A Familiar Truth

3. For how long a time have men known of history's coming climax? Acts 3:20, 21.

NOTE.—"These words take in the many unchanging promises exhibited in the prophets that have brightened the hopes of the people of God through the ages. . . . The plan of salvation has been set since before 'the foundation of the world.' (Rev. 13:8)." —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Acts 3:21.

4. What was Enoch's message? Jude 14.

NOTE.—"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. . . . Enoch, only the seventh in descent from them that dwelt in Eden, he who for three centuries on earth walked with his God, was permitted to behold from afar the coming of the Deliverer."—*The Great Controversy,* page 299.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

5. What was the climax of Nebuchadnezzar's strange dream? Dan. 2:31-35.

NOTE.—"*Without hands.* This kingdom has a superhuman origin. It is to be founded, not by the ingenious hands of man, but by the mighty hand of God."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Dan. 2:45.

6. What is represented by the stone which broke the image in pieces? Dan. 2:44, 45.

NOTE.—According to the divinely inspired explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream given in Daniel 2:38-45, this vision was a preview of the history of the world, tracing its future through the development of four world empires and ten divided kingdoms, and finding its climax in the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. It should stir us to realize that in the order of events given in this dream we are in the very feet and toes of history, awaiting the soon appearing of the stone cut out without hands.

Daniel's Vision

7. What climax of earth's history was foretold in the vision of Daniel? Dan. 7:17, 18, 27.

NOTE.—"All earthly kings and governments will pass away, but the kingdom of the Most High will endure forever. The usurpation and misrule of the wicked may last for a time, but soon it will be at an end. Then this earth will be restored to its rightful Owner, who will share it with the saints. Those who have long been destitute and despised by men will soon be honored and exalted by God."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Dan. 7:18.

8. What must take place before the saints inherit the kingdom of God? Matt. 25:31, 34.

NOTE.—Man was originally given control of this world (Gen. 1:28), but lost his dominion as a result of rebellion. It is God's purpose to restore the kingdom of righteousness in this world.

Promises in the Book of Revelation

9. What assurance is given that one day the "mystery of God" shall be finished? Rev. 10:5-7.

10. Among the last words of the Bible, what reassuring promise is given? Rev. 22:6, 7, 20.

NOTE.—"God stands back of every promise He has made. . . . The rainbow about the throne is an assurance that God is true; that in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. . . . The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word to us."—*Testimonies,* vol. 8, p. 23.

Climax of the Controversy Between Good and Evil

11. What is to take place on this earth just prior to the second coming of Christ? Dan. 12:1.

NOTE.—"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."—*The Great Controversy,* page 614.

12. What change do the righteous dead experience at Christ's second coming? 1 Thess. 4:16.

NOTE.—The Greek word here translated "shout" is translated "a cry of command" in the Revised Standard Version. "While it occurs only here in the New Testament this word is common to designate a loud military command, a shout of a charioteer to his horses, of a hunter to his hounds, of a shipmaster to the rowers. John 5:28: 'All that are in the graves shall hear His voice,' namely that of the Son of man. This is then the Lord's 'command' to all the dead to arise."—R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles,* pages 333, 334.

13. When the promised restitution of all things occurs, what condition will exist on the earth? Rev. 21:4, 5.

NOTE.—What a wonderful home the dear Lord is preparing for those who love Him! And what a happy one! For He is going to live with His people forever. With tenderest touch He will "wipe away every tear from their eyes," and nobody will ever be sad again. There will be no more death. No more sorrow. No more crying. No more pain. Only purest happiness forever and ever.

14. What gracious invitation to all who will accept it climaxes the great controversy? Rev. 22:17.

NOTE.—"The cry of Christ to the thirsty soul is still going forth. . . . The fountain is open for all. The weary and exhausted ones are offered the refreshing draught of eternal life. Jesus is still crying, . . . 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' John 4:14."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 454.

Questions for Meditation

1. How aware am I of the impending climax of this world's history?

2. How fully do I accept the invitation to drink of the "water of life"?

Lesson 3, for January 21, 1961

Signs Promised by Christ—In the Heavens

MEMORY VERSE: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Matt. 24:29.

STUDY HELPS: "The Great Controversy," chapter 17, first part; "Your Bible and You," pages 437-446; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of January 5.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-5.	☐
Monday: Questions 6-8.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 9, 10; begin reading from Study Helps.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 11-13.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading Study Helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. God's Use of Celestial Signs in the Past

1. The sun used as a token to Joshua. Joshua 10:12-14.
2. The sun used as a token to Hezekiah. 2 Kings 20:8-11.
3. Sign in heavens at time of Christ's death. Matt. 27:45.

II. Christ's Prediction of Signs in the Heavens

4. "When shall these things be?" Matt. 24:3.

5. Powers of heaven to be shaken. Luke 21:25, 26.

III. Three Outstanding Celestial Signs

6. First sign in the sun. Matt. 24:29, first part.
7. Sign in the moon. Mark 13:24.
8. Sign in the stars. Luke 21:25, first part; Matt. 24:29.

IV. Counterfeit Signs

9. False christs will also give signs. Matt. 24:24; Rev. 13:13.
10. Satan unable to counterfeit evidence of Christ's coming. Matt. 24:27.

V. Christ's Appeal

11. "Know that it is nigh." Mark 13:29.
12. "Take heed to yourselves." Luke 21:34.
13. "Watch therefore." Matt. 24:42.

THE LESSON

Introduction

The greatest event of all the ages, the second coming of Christ, is soon to take place. He wants us to know about this wonderful event so that we may be ready for it. Himself the greatest of the prophets, He promised that the approach of His return would be announced by undeniable signs in that most noticeable of all signboards, the heavens.

God's Use of Celestial Signs in the Past

1. What unusual token of the power of Israel's God was given in Joshua's time? Joshua 10:12-14.

NOTE.—"The lengthening of the day not only provided additional time for the total destruction of the enemies of Israel but was a signal demonstration of the power of Israel's God. It showed that the very gods whom the heathen worshiped were powerless before the true God. They worshiped the Canaanite god Baal and the goddess Ashtoreth. Both the sun and the moon whom they worshiped were shown to be subservient to Joshua's command, under the direction of Israel's God, Jehovah."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Joshua 10:12.

2. How was the sun used to bring a message of courage to the ailing Hezekiah? 2 Kings 20:8-11.

NOTE.—"In the ordinary course of events the shadow on a sundial would gradually advance with the forward motion of the sun, but for it suddenly to retrogress would be a most remarkable occurrence, and for this reason Hezekiah chose this sign."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on 2 Kings 20:10.

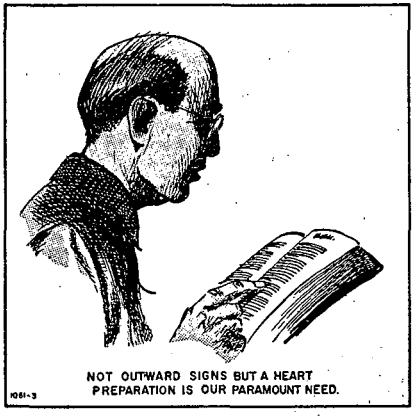
"Only by the direct interposition of God could the shadow on the sundial be made to turn back ten degrees; and this was to be the sign to Hezekiah that the Lord had heard his prayer."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 342.

3. At the crucifixion of Christ, what visible change occurred in the sun? Matt. 27:45.

NOTE.—"The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Its full, bright rays were illuminating the earth at midday, when suddenly it seemed to be blotted out. . . . There was no eclipse or other natural cause for this darkness, which was as deep as midnight without moon or stars. It was a miraculous testimony given by God that the faith of after generations might be confirmed."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 753.

Christ's Prediction of Signs in the Heavens

4. What question did the disciples ask Christ concerning the end of the world? Matt. 24:3.



5. How did Jesus speak of God's use of the heavenly bodies as signs of the end? Luke 21:25, 26.

NOTE.—"When the Lord said 'heaven,' in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said 'earth' He meant earth. The powers of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of earth are those that rule on the earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God."—*Early Writings,* page 41.

Three Outstanding Celestial Signs

6. What sign in the sun did Jesus mention as an omen of the end? Matt. 24:29, first part.

NOTE.—On May 19, 1780, over a large area of the earth's surface, daylight turned suddenly to darkness, and during the night following the moon also was obscured. Noah Webster described the strange phenomenon thus: "In some places, persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barnyard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night."—Noah Webster's Dictionary, 1869 ed., quoted in *Source Book,* page 133.

"May 19, 1780, stands in history as 'The Dark Day.' Since the time of Moses no period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration, has ever been recorded. The description of this event, as give by eyewitnesses, is but an echo of the words of the Lord, recorded by the prophet Joel, twenty-five hundred years previous to their fulfillment."—*The Great Controversy,* page 308.

7. What did Jesus prophesy about the moon as a sign of the coming of the Son of man? Mark 13:24.

NOTE.—Following the dark day of May 19, 1780, came the supernatural obscurement of the moon. " 'Nor was the darkness of the night less uncommon and terrifying than that of the day; notwithstanding there was almost a full moon, no object was discernible but by the help of some artificial light, which, when seen from the neighboring houses and other places at a distance, appeared through a kind of Egyptian darkness which seemed almost impervious to the rays.' "—*The Great Controversy,* page 308.

8. What further celestial sign did Jesus give? Luke 21:25, first part; Matt. 24:29.

NOTE.—On November 13, 1833, the most remarkable meteor shower of all time took place. Astronomer Flammarion compared the stars falling that night "at the moment of maximum, to half the number of flakes which we perceive in the air during an ordinary shower of snow."—*Popular Astronomy,* page 536, quoted in *Source Book,* pages 175, 176.

Agnes M. Clerke in the *History of Astronomy in the Nineteenth Century,* page 328, said: "On the night of November 12-13, 1833, a tempest of falling stars broke over the earth."—*Ibid.,* p. 176.

"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; 'the whole firmament, over all the United States, being then, for hours, in fiery commotion! No celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with such intense admiration by one class in the community, or with so much dread and alarm by another.' "—*The Great Controversy,* page 333.

Counterfeit Signs

9. Christ warned that in the last days imposters and false christs would arise. What amazing sign from heaven will then be performed to win the allegiance of the people? Matt. 24:24; Rev. 13:13.

NOTE.—"The bringing down of fire from heaven may be an attempt to counterfeit the miracle on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:17-39). As the ancient sign gave evidence of the power of the true God, so the beast will make it appear that God is supporting his program."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Rev. 13:13.

10. What unmistakable evidence of Christ's second coming will Satan be unable to counterfeit? Matt. 24:27.

NOTE.—"He [Christ] will not be hidden away in the wilderness nor in some guarded and secret inner room in a building. His coming and His presence will be like a flash of lightning which illuminates the sky from the east or sunrise to the west or sunset. . . . Sham christs have always been poor shams. The glory of the real Christ is beyond imitation."—R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel,* page 945.

"The people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. . . .

"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. 'There shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. . . . Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.' . . . This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known—witnessed by the whole world."—*The Great Controversy,* page 625.

Christ's Appeal

11. What are Christians to know, when they see the predicted signs coming to pass? Mark 13:29.

NOTE.—"Must we see things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said? In clear, distinct rays light has come to us, showing us that the great day of the Lord is near at hand, 'even at the doors.' Let us read and understand before it is too late."—*Testimonies,* vol. 9, p. 20.

12. In what words did Jesus warn His followers against certain fatal weaknesses that might overtake them during the waiting period preceding His coming? Luke 21:34.

NOTE.—"We have reached the period foretold in these scriptures. The time of the end is come, the visions of the prophets are unsealed, and their solemn warnings point us to our Lord's coming in glory as near at hand. The Jews misinterpreted and misapplied the word of God, and they knew not the time of their visitation. . . . While we are not to know the hour of our Lord's return, we may know when it is near."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 235.

13. In what one word did Jesus stress the necessity of constant preparedness for His return? Matt. 24:42. Compare Mark 13:35, 36.

NOTE.—"Jesus has left us word: 'Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.' [Mark 13:35-37.] We are waiting and watching for the return of the Master, who is to bring the morning, lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping. What time is here referred to? Not to the revelation of Christ in the clouds of heaven to find a people asleep. No; but to His return from His ministration in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, when He lays off His priestly attire and clothes Himself with garments of vengeance, and when the mandate goes forth: '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.' When Jesus ceases to plead for man, the cases of all are forever decided."—*Testimonies,* vol. 2, pp. 190, 191.

Questions for Meditation

1. Do I fully understand the relation between Christian conduct and the knowledge that the coming of the day of our Lord is near?
2. Am I making preparation for His return the most important work of my life?
3. Am I prepared to detect false signs when they shall appear?

Lesson 4, for January 28, 1961

Signs Promised by Christ—In the Earth

MEMORY VERSE: "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Peter 3:14.

STUDY HELPS: "The Great Controversy," chapter 17, second half; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of January 12. See also "The Desire of Ages," pages 628-633.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 11-13.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐	Thursday: Read Study Helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-7.	☐	Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-10.	☐		

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. A World in Apprehension

1. Earthquake under the sixth seal. Rev. 6:12, first part.
2. Universal fear. Luke 21:25 (second part), 26.
3. Awakening of the nations, a sign. Joel 3:9-14.
4. Weak nations specifically included. Joel 3:10.

II. A World of Discord

5. Angry nations. Rev. 11:18.
6. Class antagonism. James 5:1-6.
7. Earth cries out for new creation. Rom. 8:22.

III. A World in Spiritual Poverty

8. A faithless world. Luke 18:8.
9. A world of scoffers. 2 Peter 3:3, 4.
10. A world intolerant of truth. 2 Tim. 4:3, 4.

IV. A Church Waiting for Her Lord

11. Aware that His coming is near. Matt. 24:33.
12. Preparing for the day of God. 2 Peter 3:11, 12.
13. Purified by the blessed hope. 1 John 3:3.

THE LESSON

Introduction

"Everything in the world is in agitation. The signs of the times are ominous. Coming events cast their shadows before. The Spirit of God is withdrawing from the earth, and calamity follows calamity by sea and by land. There are tempests, earthquakes, fires, floods, murders of every grade. Who can read the future? Where is security? There is assurance in nothing that is human or earthly. Rapidly are men ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen. Restlessly are they waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. There are those who are waiting and watching and working for our Lord's appearing. Another class are falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win. . . .

"Solemnly there come to us down through the centuries the warning words of our Lord from the Mount of Olives: . . . 'Watch ye therefore, and pray always.' "—*The Desire of Ages,* page 636.

A World in Apprehension

1. What divine intervention as given in the prophecy of the sixth seal was to be a warning of the time of the end? Rev. 6:12, first part.

NOTE.—"The events of the sixth seal reveal the disjointing of the physical universe. The prophet Joel had already used the figure of an earthquake to describe the upheaval of nature in the day of the Lord (Joel 2:10; cf. Isa. 13:9-11; Amos 8:9)."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Rev. 6:12.

"The great earthquake of [November 1] 1755 extended over a trace of at least four millions of square miles. . . . It pervaded the greater portions of the continents of Europe, Africa, and America; but its extreme violence was exercised on the southwestern part of the former." "In Africa, this earthquake was felt almost as severely as it had been in Europe. . . . It is probable . . . that all Africa was shaken. . . . At the north, it extended to Norway and Sweden; Germany, Holland, France, Great Britain, and Ireland were all more or less agitated by the same great and terrible commotion of the elements."—Robert Sears, *Wonders of the World,* pages 50, 58.

2. What would multiplied signs of coming judgment produce in men's hearts? Luke 21:25 (second part), 26.

NOTE.—"Distress" comes from a Greek word used in the New Testament only here and in 2 Corinthians 2:4, meaning "anguish." The Revised Standard Version has "Distress of nations in perplexity." Robertson says that "in perplexity" is the "state of one . . . who has lost his way."—*Word Pictures,* vol. 2, p. 260.

3. What is predicted concerning the slumbering nations of earth? Joel 3: 9-14.

NOTE.—"Adventist expositors have generally seen in this prophecy a forecast, not only of climactic events associated with the great day of the Lord, but also of international military activities in the final days of earth's history."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Joel 3:9.

One of the phenomena of our times is the awakening of nations that have slept for

centuries. From Korea to India, from Ghana to Vietnam, from Indonesia to Egypt, from Pakistan to Algeria, vast areas are in ferment.

4. What unexpected claim will weak nations make? Joel 3:10.

NOTE.—Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the awakening of the nations is that even the smallest and weakest countries are demanding—and getting—equal rights with the great powers at the world's council tables.

A World of Discord

5. What leads to the outpouring of God's wrath? Rev. 11:18. Compare Ps. 2:1.

NOTE.—"*Nations were angry*. . . . Such will be the condition of the nations prior to the coming of Christ. They will band together to oppose the work and people of Christ. . . .

"*Wrath.* The wrath of God is summed up in the seven last plagues (ch. 15:1). The work of opposition against Christ is brought to a halt by these plagues."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Rev. 11:18.

6. What picture of antagonism between rich and poor in the last days is given by the apostle James? James 5:1-6.

NOTE.—Oppression of the poor and selfishness among the rich have existed in every age. The psalmist fretted enviously at "the prosperity of the wicked." Ps. 73:2, 3. In the disciples' day some rich persons "despised the poor," oppressed them, and haled them "before the judgment seats." James 2:6. These conditions will exist until "the coming of the Lord." James 5:7. "Coming" is from the Greek word *parousia,* signifying the personal coming of Christ. He alone can solve the world's mounting problems of inequity, oppression, selfishness, hatred.

7. What is the condition of the earth? Rom. 8:22. Compare Ps. 102: 25, 26.

NOTE.—When we consider the weather—typhoons, tornadoes, hurricanes, blizzards, dust storms, flash floods, cold waves, heat waves, dry spells, wet spells; when we consider the atmosphere—damp, heavy fog and hot, dry winds; when we think of insects and fungi and bacteria and weeds and erosion, there is no doubt that the earth is "waxing old" and is ready for the transformation God has promised.

A World in Spiritual Poverty

8. How did Jesus associate His coming with a lack of faith on the earth? Luke 18:8.

NOTE.—Jesus had been teaching that God would "avenge His own elect" (verses 7, 8), and now He connects His second coming with that event. These two events are associated in Matthew 16:27, in Revelation 22:12, and elsewhere.

"This doctrine [that all the world will be converted] . . . does not harmonize with the teachings of Christ and His apostles. Jesus asked the significant question, 'When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?' Luke 18:8. And, as we have seen, He declares that the state of the world will be as in the days of Noah."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 103.

9. What will scoffers in the last days say about the coming of Christ? 2 Peter 3:3, 4.

NOTE.—This scoffing occurs whenever the second coming is preached. It was the attitude of many in the early days of the advent message. See *The Great Controversy,* page 370. It will be increasingly so as the end approaches.

"He [Peter] is not here making specific statements regarding the time of Christ's coming, but is bent on preparing his flock for 'the last days' whenever those days may

appear."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on 2 Peter 3:3.

"The attention of the people should be called to the momentous event which is so near at hand. The signs of the times should be kept fresh before their minds. . . . When these things are dwelt upon as they should be, scoffers will be developed who walk after their own lusts."—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, pp. 9, 10.

10. What did Paul predict regarding intolerance to sound doctrine at some future time? 2 Tim. 4:3, 4.

NOTE.—"The apostle was undoubtedly thinking of the great apostasy that was soon to develop in the church, and which would continue to imperil it until the second advent of Christ."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on 2 Tim. 4:3.

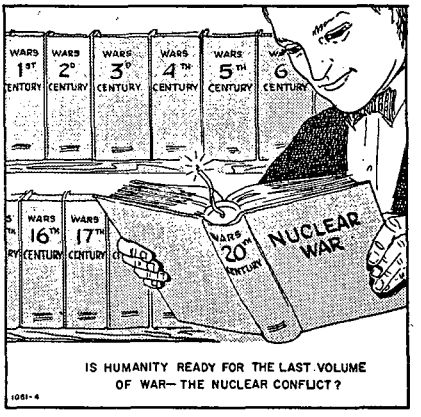
"The ministers of Christ today are in the same danger. Satan is constantly at work to divert the mind into wrong channels, so that the truth may lose its force upon the heart." —*Gospel Workers,* page 312.

A Church Waiting for Her Lord

11. How may the believer tell when the end is near? Matt. 24:33.

NOTE.—The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew contains warnings of Jerusalem's destruction, as well as of the end of the world. The Lord would have us differentiate between these signs, as the language of Matthew 24:27-33 indicates. We are to "see all these things," "know that it is near," and be ready for our Lord to come. Matt. 24:42.

"Jesus declares: 'There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations.' Luke 21:25. . . . Those who behold these harbingers of His coming are to 'know that it is near, even at the doors.' Matt. 24:33. 'Watch ye therefore,' are His words of admonition. Mark 13:35. They that heed the warning shall not be left in darkness, that that day should overtake them unawares. But to them that will not watch, 'the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.' 1 Thess. 5:2-5."—*The Great Controversy,* pages 37, 38.



IS HUMANITY READY FOR THE LAST VOLUME OF WAR—THE NUCLEAR CONFLICT?

12. What is the relation between Christian conduct and the knowledge that the coming of the day of God is near? 2 Peter 3:11, 12.

NOTE.—"Many . . . professed Christians dress, talk, and act like the world, and the only thing by which they may be known is their profession. Though they profess to be looking for Christ, their conversation is not in heaven, but on worldly things. 'What manner of persons' ought those to be 'in all holy conversation and godliness,' who profess to be 'looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.' 2 Peter 3:11."—*Early Writings,* page 108.

13. What will the blessed hope do for a man? 1 John 3:3.

NOTE.—"*Purifieth.* . . . 'To cleanse from defilement,' 'to purify.' The word is applied to both ceremonial and moral cleansing (John 11:55; Acts 21:24, 26; 24:18; James 4:8; 1 Peter 1:22). Sinful man cannot cleanse himself; he is sold under sin and utterly dependent upon the Saviour for purity (Jer. 17:9; John 3:3; 15:4, 5; Rom. 8:7). Nevertheless, there is some work that man, with divine aid, must do for himself. . . . This work demands diligent watching and prayer (Eph. 6:13-18; Col. 4:2; Rev. 3:3)." —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on 1 John 3:3.

Questions for Meditation

1. Am I trusting in man, or in God, for a solution of present world problems?

2. Do I genuinely desire the outcome of history as revealed in the Bible?

Lesson 5, for February 4, 1961

Signs in Social Life

MEMORY VERSE. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." Luke 17:26.

STUDY HELPS: "Patriarchs and Prophets," chapter 7, and first half of chapter 14; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of January 19.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 12-14; begin reading from Study Helps.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3.	☐	Thursday: Read from Study Helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 4-8.	☐	Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 9-11.	☐		

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. Ancient Social Conditions

1. Last days likened to days of Noah and Lot. Luke 17:26, 28.
2. Conditions in Noah's day. Gen. 6:2, 5, 11.
3. Conditions in Lot's day. Ezek. 16:49, 50; 2 Peter 2:7.

II. Modern Social Conditions

4. Perilous times. 2 Tim. 3:1.
5. Children disobedient to parents. 2 Tim. 3:2.
6. Lovers of pleasure. 2 Tim. 3:4, last part.
7. Having a form of godliness. 2 Tim. 3:5.
8. Growing worse and worse. 2 Tim. 3:13.

III. Wickedness Brings Destruction

9. Ancient world destroyed by Flood. Gen. 6:3, 7; 7:11, 21, 22.
10. Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed by fire. Gen. 19:24, 25.
11. Present world to be burned up. 2 Peter 3:5-7, 10.

IV. Men Urged to Repent

12. Noah and Lot preached repentance. 2 Peter 2: 5, 7.
13. Some righteous persons proclaim God's message now. Rev. 14:6.
14. Final appeal. 2 Peter 3:11, 12; Rev. 18:4.

Introduction

Mercy before destruction. "Before the Flood, God sent Noah to warn the world, that the people might be led to repentance, and thus escape the threatened destruction. As the time of Christ's second appearing draws near, the Lord sends His servants with a warning to the world to prepare for that great event. Multitudes have been living in transgression of God's law, and now He in mercy calls them to obey its sacred precepts. All who will put away their sins by repentance toward God and faith in Christ are offered pardon."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 102.

Ancient Social Conditions

1. To what earlier periods of history did Christ liken the last days? Luke 17:26, 28.

2. What were the social and spiritual conditions in Noah's day? Gen. 6:2, 5, 11.

NOTE.—Before the Flood, "men chose to follow their own sinful desires; and as the result, crime and wretchedness rapidly increased. Neither the marriage relation nor the rights of property were respected. Whoever coveted the wives or the possessions of his neighbor, took them by force, and men exulted in their deeds of violence."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 92.

"How was it in Noah's day? 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' Gen. 6:5. The inhabitants of the antediluvian world turned from Jehovah, refusing to do His holy will. They followed their own unholy imagination and perverted ideas. It was because of their wickedness that they were destroyed; and today the world is following the same way. It presents no flattering signs of millennial glory. The transgressors of God's law are filling the earth with wickedness. Their betting, their horse racing, their gambling, their dissipation, their lustful practices, their untamable passions, are fast filling the world with violence."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 633.

3. What were the social and spiritual conditions in Sodom and Gomorrah? Ezek. 16:49, 50; 2 Peter 2:7.

NOTE.—"In Sodom there was mirth and revelry, feasting and drunkenness. The vilest and most brutal passions were unrestrained. The people openly defied God and His law and delighted in deeds of violence. Though they had before them the example of the antediluvian world, and knew how the wrath of God had been manifested in their destruction, yet they followed the same course of wickedness."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 157.

Modern Social Conditions

4. What similar conditions did Paul predict for the last days? 2 Tim. 3:1.

NOTE.—We are living in perilous times, indeed. In recent years millions have been tortured and killed in concentration camps. The FBI *Uniform Crime Reports* reveals that a violent crime—murder, manslaughter, rape, assault with intent to kill—is committed every four minutes in the U.S.A. Nearly forty persons are murdered every day. As violence filled the antediluvian world, so it fills our world today.

5. What will be the attitude of young people? 2 Tim. 3:2.

NOTE.—Juvenile delinquency begins with disobedience to parents. Again referring to the FBI *Uniform Crime Reports,* more than a quarter of a million youth under 18 were arrested in 1958. Juvenile delinquency is a world-wide problem—England has its "Teddy boys" and Japan its street gangs.

6. What would be the consuming interest of people living in the last days? 2 Tim. 3:4, last part.

7. What general attitude toward religion is predicted? 2 Tim. 3:5.

8. In what words did the apostle Paul indicate that conditions will not improve as we near the end of time? 2 Tim. 3:13.

NOTE.—In one short sentence Paul destroys the theory of a temporal millennium before Christ comes. And sin is certainly waxing "worse and worse." Take, for instance, the one evil of alcoholism—the amount spent for alcoholic beverages in the United States in one year is more than the combined total of money paid for all books, magazines, and newspapers and contributed to all religious bodies and welfare activities. See Roger Burgess, *Drinking Problems*.

"The real cost of alcoholism cannot be measured because no one can put a price tag on a broken home, a brilliant career down the drain, a human life that turns into a nightmare of hangovers, blackouts, broken promises, and uncontrollable cravings.

"But a minor part of the cost can be estimated. Wage losses attributed to alcoholism amount to $432 million a year. When you add in higher crime and accident rates, law enforcement and medical expenses, authorities consider one billion dollars a year a conservative figure for the direct countable cost of alcoholism."—Louis Cassels, *Post & Herald,* Washington, D.C., July 19, 1957.

Wickedness Brings Destruction

9. When the antediluvians had filled their cup of iniquity, what did God do? Gen. 6:3, 7; 7:11, 21, 22.

NOTE.—"From the highest peaks men looked abroad upon a shoreless ocean. The solemn warnings of God's servant no longer

THE GREAT ISSUE: NOT, HOW SOON WILL CHRIST COME, BUT, HOW MANY WILL BE READY?

seemed a subject for ridicule and scorning. How those doomed sinners longed for the opportunities which they had slighted! How they pleaded for one hour's probation, one more privilege of mercy, one call from the lips of Noah! But the sweet voice of mercy was no more to be heard by them. . . . The avenging waters swept over the last retreat, and the despisers of God perished in the black depths."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* pages 100, 101.

10. What befell Sodom and Gomorrah? Gen. 19:24, 25.

NOTE.—"The fair vale of Siddim became a desolation, a place never to be built up or inhabited—a witness to all generations of the certainty of God's judgments upon transgression."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 162.

11. What is predicted regarding the end of the present world? 2 Peter 3:5-7, 10.

NOTE.—"When the reasoning of philosophy has banished the fear of God's judgments; when religious teachers are pointing forward to long ages of peace and prosperity, and the world are absorbed in their rounds of business and pleasure, planting and building, feasting and merrymaking, rejecting

God's warnings and mocking His messengers—then it is that sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 104.

14. In view of the impending destruction, what appeal does God make? 2 Peter 3:11, 12; Rev. 18:4.

Men Urged to Repent

12. Through whom were messages of repentance sent to Sodom and the antediluvian world? 2 Peter 2:5, 7.

13. What message will be sent to the world in the last days? Rev. 14:6.

Questions for Meditation

1. If I had been living in Noah's day would I have accepted his invitation to enter the ark?
2. Does my social life in any way resemble Paul's description of the last days, or is it an evidence of God's sanctifying power?
3. Am I determined that, come what may, my influence shall always be on the side of right?

Lesson 6, for February 11, 1961

The Spread of Spiritism

MEMORY VERSE: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Rev. 16:13,14.

STUDY HELPS: "The Great Controversy," chapters 31-34, 36; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of January 26.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

Check Here

Sabbath afternoon: General survey. ☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3; begin reading from Study Helps. ☐
Monday: Questions 4-6; read further from Study Helps. ☐
Tuesday: Questions 7, 8; read further from Study Helps. ☐
Wednesday: Questions 9-11; read further from Study Helps. ☐
Thursday: Finish reading Study Helps. ☐
Friday: Review entire lesson. ☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. Deceptive Spirit Miracles in Bible Times

1. The first spirit miracle designed to deceive men. Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:1-6.
2. Spirit miracles in Egypt. Ex. 7:12.
3. Spiritism at Endor used to ensnare Saul. 1 Sam. 28:7, 15-19.

II. Spirit Miracles in Modern Times

4. Recent developments in spirit-miracle activity.

III. Last-Day Spiritism Foretold

5. Three froglike spirits seen. Rev. 16:13, 14.
6. The means employed. Rev. 16:14.
7. The supreme deceptive miracle. 2 Thess. 2:8-12.
8. The goal of spirit manifestations. Rev. 16:14; 13:13-15.

IV. The Christian's Only Safety

9. Genuine love for God a safeguard. Matt. 24:24.
10. God's word alone the criterion for truth. John 17:17; Isa. 8:19, 20.
11. Thorough gospel preparation needed. Eph. 6:11, 12.

THE LESSON

Introduction

Ever since the beginning of time, evil spirits have associated miracles with false doctrines in order to deceive men. In the closing years of time, when Satan is angry because his time is short (Rev. 12:12), there is to be a marked increase in such spirit-miracle activity. As this swelling tide of evil spiritism coincides with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, humanity will be brought to its final hour of decision.

In the prophetic symbolism of Revelation 16:13, 14, the "beast" is Catholicism, and the "dragon," primarily Satan and also pagan Rome, is paganism. The "false prophet" is to be identified with the latter phase of the lamblike beast of Revelation 13. Compare Rev. 13:13-15 with Rev. 19:20.

Paganism has always been concerned with the worship of evil spirits, while Catholicism places large emphasis on reverence for deceased persons considered to be still living, such as the mother of Jesus, and the "saints." This prophecy foretells a time when similar regard for spiritism will pervade the Protestant church as well, and will then, in an intensified form, move outward from all three of these large religious forces to draw the whole world into perdition.

Amazing recent developments in spiritism (communion with evil spirits—purported communion with the dead) and in spirit-assisted miracles of healing, especially in Protestant lands, give evidence that these prophecies are about to be fulfilled. These developments constitute a sign of the times.

Deceptive Spirit Miracles in Bible Times

1. What means were used by the prince of evil spirits to lead men into disobedience? Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:1-6.

NOTE.—"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, 'Ye shall not surely die.' . . . Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of Spiritualism."—*The Great Controversy,* page 561.

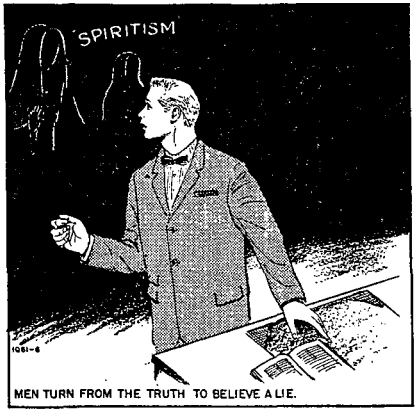
2. How did Egyptian magicians endeavor to nullify the command of God by their spirit miracles? Ex. 7:12. Compare Ex. 7:1-13.

NOTE.—"The magicians did not really cause their rods to become serpents; but by magic, aided by the great deceiver, they were able to produce this appearance. It was beyond the power of Satan to change the rods to living serpents. . . . To human sight the rods were changed to serpents. Such they were believed to be by Pharaoh and his court. There was nothing in their appearance to distinguish them from the serpent produced by Moses. . . .

"Pharaoh desired to justify his stubbornness in resisting the divine command, and hence he was seeking some pretext for disregarding the miracles that God had wrought through Moses. Satan gave him just what he wanted."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 264.

3. When Saul had transgressed so far that he felt God had forsaken him, to whom did he turn for counsel? with what result? 1 Sam. 28:7, 15-19.

NOTE.—"It is distinctly stated that Saul inquired of the familiar spirit, not of the Lord. He did not communicate with Sam-



MEN TURN FROM THE TRUTH TO BELIEVE A LIE.

uel, the prophet of God; but through the sorceress he held intercourse with Satan."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 683.

Spirit Miracles in Modern Times

4. What evidence is there of increased spirit activities today?

ANSWER: The modern form of spiritism (purported communion with the dead) arose in the form of mysterious rappings in the home of John D. Fox, Hydesville, New York, March, 1848. By 1918 the famous English spiritualist Sir Arthur Conan Doyle could say, "The lowly manifestations of Hydesville have ripened into results which have engaged the finest group of intellects in this country during the last twenty years, and which are destined, in my opinion, to bring about far the greatest development of human experience which the world has ever seen."—Quoted in Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation,* 1944 ed., pp. 587, 588.

Recent developments include the following: In Britain, (*a*) the Church of England has been urged by one of its official committees to adopt spiritism in the interest of world-wide church unity; (*b*) healers are plainly stating that their thousands of marvelous cures are due to assistance from the spirit world; (*c*) spiritist "evangelistic" meetings are being held in the largest halls; (*d*) The London Atherius Society, now spread to many lands, has recorded spirit messages predicting that a "great master" will soon come to save the world from atomic destruction. The British Broadcasting Corporation has broadcast some of these recordings.

In France, "in religious circles there is keen interest in parapsychology [telepathy, clairvoyance, etc.] and Spiritualism. The Catholic Church is wondering how it can, without endangering itself, use them to strengthen its own teaching of a spirit life after death."—Andre Dumas, in *The National Spiritualist,* vol. 35, No. 347, p. 7, quoted in *The Ministry,* September, 1958, page 13.

Last-Day Spiritism Foretold

5. What sinister spirit forms will be at work in the last days? Rev. 16: 13, 14.

NOTE.—"The 'three unclean spirits' apparently either symbolize or represent this evil trio of religious powers [paganism, the papacy, and apostate Protestantism], which together constitute latter-day 'great Babylon.' "—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Rev. 16:13.

"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."—*The Great Controversy,* page 624.

6. What means will the three spirits use in their work? Rev. 16:14. Compare Rev. 13:14; 19:20.

7. What deceptive miracles will be employed by evil spirits? 2 Thess. 2:8-12. Compare Matt. 24:24.

NOTE.—"Modern Spiritualism, resting upon the same foundation [as ancient idolatry], is but a revival in a new form of the witchcraft and demon worship that God condemned and prohibited of old. . . . Paul . . . points to the special working of Satan in Spiritualism as an event to take place immediately before the second advent of Christ. Speaking of Christ's second coming, he declares that it is 'after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.' 2 Thessalonians 2:9."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 686.

8. What is the goal of these miracle-working spirits? Rev. 16:14; 13:13-15.

NOTE.—"Supernatural manifestations of various kinds constitute the means by which Satan, working through various human agencies, succeeds in uniting the world behind his purpose to obliterate those who constitute the only barrier to his unchallenged dominion over mankind."—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* on Rev. 16:14.

The Christian's Only Safety

9. What close test of loyalty to God will come to the Christian through last-day miracles? Matt. 24:24. Compare Deut. 13:1-5.

10. What is the only safe criterion for truth? John 17:17; Isa. 8:19, 20.

NOTE.—"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."—*The Great Controversy,* page 593.

11. What preparation is required of those who would successfully resist these deceptions? Eph. 6:11, 12. Compare verses 13-18.

NOTE.—"Just before us is the 'hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.' Revelation 3:10. 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, thus doing what they can to prepare for the conflict, will find, in the God of truth, a sure defense. 'Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee,' is the Saviour's promise. 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."—*The Great Controversy,* page 560.

Questions for Meditation

1. Am I developing a spiritual experience that will testify more strongly for Christ than the spirit miracles will for the forces of evil?
2. What, after all, is the greatest miracle?

The senior "Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly" is published in the following foreign languages: Czech, German, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Russian, Slovakian, Spanish, Swedish, Ukrainian, and Yugoslav. Write to the Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California, for any of these quarterlies for the strangers within your gates.

Counterfeit Signs

MEMORY VERSE: "For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matt. 24:24.

STUDY HELPS: "The Great Controversy," chapters 37, 38, and first half of 39; "Testimonies," vol. 1, pp. 290-302; vol. 5, pp. 696-698; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of February 2.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-7; begin reading from Study Helps.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-11.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 12-14; read further from Study Helps.	☐
Thursday: Read from Study Helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. Warning Concerning Counterfeit Signs

1. False christs, prophets, and signs. Matt. 24:24.
2. Misleading miracles. Rev. 13:13, 14.
3. The supreme delusion. 2 Cor. 11:14.
4. Many will be deceived. 1 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 13:8.

II. Satan's Successful Use of the Counterfeit

5. Counterfeit miracles in Egypt. Ex. 7:10-12.
6. Counterfeit movements in the last days.
7. Counterfeit revivals. 2 Tim. 3:5.

III. How to Discern the Counterfeit

8. Prove all things. 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 4:1-3.
9. "To the law and to the testimony." Isa. 8:20.
10. According to God's expressed will. Deut. 13:1-4.
11. The manner of Christ's coming cannot be counterfeited. Matt. 24:24-27; 25:31.

IV. Necessary Preparation

12. Know the reasons for our faith. 1 Peter 3:15.
13. Search as did the Bereans. Acts 17:11.
14. Obedience and faith. Rev. 3:10.

THE LESSON

Introduction

As the end approaches, Satan's deceptions will increase in subtlety. His supreme effort will be directed against the remnant church, if only to nullify the great work God has commissioned it to do in preparation for Christ's second coming. Many will be deceived, "giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." They will "go out from us," says Ellen G. White in *Notebook Leaflets,* "The Church," No. 3, p. 1. It is therefore of the utmost importance that every member become familiar with Satan's strat-

egy and how to meet it, so as to be both forewarned and forearmed for the perils ahead. "Nothing disturbs Satan so much as our knowledge of his devices. If we feel our dangers we shall feel the need of prayer." —*Testimonies,* vol. 3, p. 572.

Warning Concerning Counterfeit Signs

1. Of what counterfeits did Christ warn His disciples? Matt. 24:24.

2. What means will be used to deceive the world in the last days? Rev. 13:13, 14. Compare Rev. 16:14.

3. What will be the supreme delusion? 2 Cor. 11:14. Compare 2 Thess. 2:9.

NOTE.—"Satan came as an angel of light in the wilderness of temptation to deceive Christ. . . . He will come personating Jesus Christ, working mighty miracles; and men will fall down and worship him as Jesus Christ. We shall be commanded to worship this being, whom the world will glorify as Christ. What shall we do?—Tell them that Christ has warned us against just such a foe, who is man's worst enemy, yet who claims to be God; and that when Christ shall make His appearance, it will be with power and great glory, accompanied by ten thousand times ten thousand angels and thousands of thousands; and that when He shall come, we shall know His voice (RH Dec. 18, 1888)."—Ellen G. White Comments, on 2 Cor. 11:14, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 6, pp. 1105, 1106.

"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. . . . The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: 'Christ has come! Christ has come!' . . . He heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday. . . . This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion."—*The Great Controversy,* page 624.

4. How many will be deceived? 1 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 13:8.

NOTE.—"All whose faith is not firmly established upon the word of God will be deceived and overcome."—*The Great Controversy,* page 560.

Satan's Successful Use of the Counterfeit

5. Through what means did Satan succeed in turning Pharaoh against the authority of the true God? Ex. 7: 10-12.

NOTE.—"It was beyond the power of Satan to change the rods to living serpents. The prince of evil, though possessing all the wisdom and might of an angel fallen, has not power to create, or to give life; this is the prerogative of God alone. But all that was in Satan's power to do, he did; he produced a counterfeit."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 264.

6. During the past century what great counterfeits have paralleled the rise and development of the advent movement?

ANSWER: Since 1844 God has raised up a people to announce the soon coming of Christ and to teach the truth concerning the Sabbath, the heavenly sanctuary, and the mortality of the soul. In fulfillment of the prediction of Revelation 12:17 and 19:10 God has blessed them with the guidance of the spirit of prophecy.

During this very same period Satan has stirred up numerous counterfeit movements, some with counterfeit prophets and prophetic writings, some even with counterfeit christs. Spiritism with its false wonders has lured millions to belief in the error of the immortality of the soul. The widely held theory of evolution has undermined faith in God's creative power, in the Scriptural basis of Sabbath observance, and in the plan of salvation.

7. What counterfeit religious activity in the Christian world will parallel the final revival among God's people? 2 Tim. 3:5.

NOTE.—"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 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. . . .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."—*The Great Controversy,* page 464.

How to Discern the Counterfeit

8. How are Christians advised to distinguish between the true and the counterfeit? 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 4:1-3.

9. To what should God's people look as the standard of truth? Isa. 8:20.

NOTE.—"God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the basis of all reforms. . . . Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in its support."—*The Great Controversy,* page 595.

10. Even if a false prophet should perform a miracle, upon what basis may his authority be denied? Deut. 13:1-4.

11. In view of the activities of counterfeit christs, how may Christians recognize the coming of the true Son of God? Matt. 24:24-27; 25:31. Compare 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 1:7.

NOTE.—"Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ's advent. . . . This coming, there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known—witnessed by the whole world."—*The Great Controversy,* page 625.

Necessary Preparation

12. How thoroughly should Christians be acquainted with the reasons for their beliefs? 1 Peter 3:15.

NOTE.—"The Lord desires that every soul who claims to believe the truth shall have an intelligent knowledge of what is truth. False prophets will arise, and will deceive many. Everything is to be shaken that can be shaken. Then does it not become every-

one to understand the reasons of our faith?" —Ellen G. White, *Notebook Leaflets,* "The Church," No. 3, p. 1.

13. How did the Bereans determine whether Paul's teachings were true or false? Acts 17:11.

NOTE.—"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."—*The Great Controversy,* page 593.

"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. . . . Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? . . . Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day."—*Ibid.,* p. 625.

14. To whom does God promise protection in times of trial? Rev. 3:10.

NOTE.—"He [Satan] can gain his object only as men voluntarily yield to his temptations. Those who are earnestly seeking a knowledge of the truth and striving to purify their souls through obedience, thus doing what they can to prepare for the conflict, 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."—*The Great Controversy,* page 560.

"The more we learn in reference to the early days of the Christian church, and see with what subtlety Satan worked to weaken and destroy, the better we shall be prepared to resist his devices and meet coming perils. We are in the time when tribulations such as the world has never yet seen will prevail. . . . But God has set bounds that Satan cannot pass. Our most holy faith is this barrier; and if we build ourselves up in the faith, we shall be safe in the keeping of the Mighty One."—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 297.

Questions for Meditation

1. If some unusually gifted and charming person should arise, performing miracles and preaching Christian love but denying God's laws, what would be my attitude toward him?

2. Am I resolved to remain loyal to the teachings of the Bible no matter what may happen in the future?

Lesson 8, for February 25, 1961

The Last Great Sign

MEMORY VERSE: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. 24:14.

STUDY HELPS: "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 225-237 (chapter, "Go Into the Highways and Hedges"); "Testimonies," vol. 8, pp. 19-23; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of February 9. See also "The Great Controversy," chapter 38.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1, 2; begin reading from Study Helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 3-5; read further from Study Helps.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 6-10.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 11-13.	☐
Thursday: Read from Study Helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. The Gospel to All the World

1. All men to have witness borne to them. Matt. 24:14.
2. All must have a basis for decision. Rom. 10:14.

II. The Advent Movement

3. The work symbolized by the three angels. Rev. 14:6-12.
4. Present extent of this work.
5. The "loud cry." Rev. 18:1.

III. Greater Power Than at Pentecost

6. The results of the "former rain." Acts 2:41, 43.
7. The gospel to every nation. Col. 1:5, 6, 23.
8. The promise of the "latter rain." Joel 2:28, 29.
9. The gift of the Spirit. Acts 1:8.
10. The urgency of the final invitation. Luke 14:23.

IV. In This Generation

11. Hastening the coming. 2 Peter 3:11, 12, 14.
12. "With one accord." Acts 1:14; 2:1; 4:13.
13. The great commission. Mark 16:15

THE LESSON

Introduction

In a special sense, the preaching of the gospel to all the world is one of the last great signs, and as time goes by it will become ever more clearly recognizable. At last, shortly before the end, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the dedicated activities of God's people, and their employment of spectacular scientific inventions, the entire inhabited globe will be "lightened" with the glory of God's love through the presentation of His final message of mercy. Rev. 18:1.

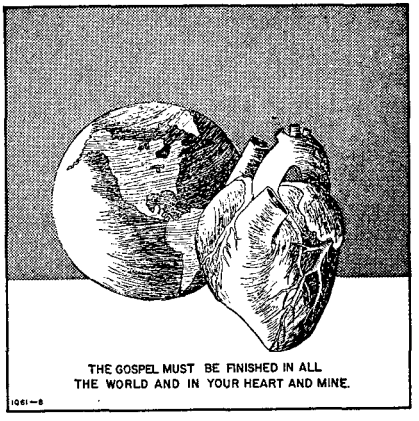
The Gospel to All the World

1. What great work did Christ say will be completed before the end comes? Matt. 24:14.

NOTE.—"Before the fall of Jerusalem, Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, declared that the gospel was preached to 'every creature which is under heaven.' Col. 1:23. So now, before the coming of the Son of man, the everlasting gospel is to be preached 'to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.' Rev. 14:6, 14. God 'hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world.' Acts 17:31. Christ tells us when that day shall be ushered in. He does not say that all the world will be converted, but that 'this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.' "—*The Desire of Ages,* page 633.

2. Why must all hear the gospel before probation closes? Rom. 10:14.

NOTE.—"Not one is made to suffer the wrath of God until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and has been rejected. . . . He who reads every heart and tries every motive will leave none who desire a knowledge of the truth, to be deceived as to the issues of the con-



troversy. . . . Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently."—*The Great Controversy,* page 605.

"It will not be long before everyone will have heard the warning and made his decision. Then shall the end come."—*Testimonies,* vol. 6, p. 24.

The Advent Movement

3. What religious awakening is represented by the three angels of Revelation 14? Rev. 14:6-12.

NOTE.—"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. An angel is seen flying 'in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.' 'With a loud voice,' he proclaims the message: 'Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.'" —*The Great Controversy,* page 355.

"Like the great Reformation of the sixteenth 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."—*Ibid.,* p. 357.

4. What is the present extent of the work of the advent movement?

ANSWER: At the close of 1958 Seventh-day Adventists were working in 189 of the 213 countries and islands of the world, using 791 languages and dialects. Their literature was being issued in 218 languages by 44 publishing houses. Their medical work was being conducted by 2,965 doctors and nurses in 221 sanitariums, hospitals, and clinics around the world. Their educational program was carried on in 4,568 elementary schools and 324 colleges and academies. They employed 5,757 ordained and licensed pastors and evangelists who were engaged in active preaching of the gospel, besides another 1,149 ordained ministers engaged in administrative and promotional work.

5. What climax finishes the proclamation of the gospel? Rev. 18:1.

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

Greater Power Than at Pentecost

6. What results attended the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost? Acts 2:41, 43.

7. How widely was the gospel proclaimed by the first generation of Christians? Col. 1:5, 6, 23.

8. What still greater manifestation of the divine power has been promised for the last days? Joel 2:28, 29.

NOTE.—"In immediate connection with the scenes of the great day of God, the Lord by the prophet Joel has promised a special manifestation of His Spirit. Joel 2:28. This prophecy received a partial fulfillment in the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost; but it will reach its full accomplishment in the manifestation of divine grace which will attend the closing work of the gospel."—*The Great Controversy,* Introduction, page ix.

"If this prophecy of Joel met a partial fulfillment in the days of the apostles, we are living in a time when it is to be even more evidently manifest to the people of God. He will so bestow His Spirit upon His people that they will become a light amid the moral darkness; and great light will be reflected in all parts of the world. O that our faith might be increased, that the Lord might work mightily with His people."—Ellen G. White Comments, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 4, p. 1175.

9. How are the believers to be qualified to spread the gospel? Acts 1:8. Compare 1 Cor. 12:7-10.

NOTE.—"It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. . . .

"While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not . . . lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the sower will have been in vain. Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work."—*Testimonies to Ministers,* pages 507, 508.

10. With what urgency will the final warning be given? Luke 14:23.

NOTE.—"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."—*The Great Controversy,* page 612.

In This Generation

11. What standard of preparation of heart and life must God's people reach in order to hasten the return of Christ in their generation? 2 Peter 3:11, 12, 14.

NOTE.—"By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord's return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 633.

12. What qualifications enabled the apostles to carry the gospel to the entire world in their time? Acts 1:14; 2:1; 4:13.

NOTE.—"No longer were their hopes set on wordly greatness. They were of 'one accord,' of one mind and one soul. Christ filled their thoughts. The advancement of His kingdom was their aim. In mind and character they had become like their Master."—*Education,* page 95.

13. What great commission has yet to be fulfilled in our time? Mark 16:15. Compare Matt. 28:19, 20.

NOTE.—There is much work yet to be done. But it can be completed in our time if we seek for the same spiritual qualifications that enabled the apostles to carry the gospel to every nation under heaven in their generation.

"Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 69.

Questions for Meditation

1. Does my life witness to my eagerness for Christ's return?
2. Am I doing all I can to help others to hear the glad tidings of the second advent, and so hasten Christ's return?

Lesson 9, for March 4, 1961

How Near Is the End?

MEMORY VERSE: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Mark 13:32.

STUDY HELPS: "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 405-421 (chapter, "To Meet the Bridegroom"); "Evangelism," pages 694-697; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of February 16. See also "The Desire of Ages," chapter 69.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1, 2; begin reading from Study Helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 3-6.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 7-9.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 10-13.	☐
Thursday: Read from Study Helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. Exact Time a Mystery

1. Known only to God. Mark 13:32; Matt. 24:36.
2. All may know the end is near. Matt. 24:33.

II. Warnings of Apparent Delay

3. "Ye have need of patience." Heb. 10:35-37.
4. Holding of the four winds. Rev. 7:1-3.
5. "While the bridegroom tarried." Matt. 25:1-13.
6. "Where is the promise of His coming?" 2 Peter 3:3, 4.

III. Reasons for the Delay

7. Not ready to be sealed. Rev. 7:3.
8. The gospel must be given to all the world. Matt. 24:14.
9. God's forbearance. 2 Peter 3:9.

IV. Need for Watchfulness

10. "Though it tarry." Hab. 2:1-4.
11. "Lest coming suddenly." Luke 12:35-40.
12. "My Lord delayeth His coming." Matt. 24:48-51.
13. "Occupy till I come." Luke 19:13.

Introduction

Some people busy themselves mapping out the future, bending the time prophecies of the Bible to fit their own theories. It is a futile effort, for "the exact time of the second coming of the Son of man is God's mystery."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 633. However, while God has, for excellent reasons, withheld this information, He has supplied evidence enough to indicate when this climactic event is approaching. He has so ordered this matter that His people shall be ever on the alert, constantly watching and praying for their Lord's return.

Exact Time a Mystery

1. Who alone knows the exact time of Christ's coming? Mark 13:32; Matt. 24:36.

2. What are Christians expected to know about the time of the advent? Matt. 24:33.

NOTE.—While "ye know neither the day nor the hour," Jesus clearly desires us to know when it is near.

"Are we to wait until the fulfillment of the prophecies of the end before we say anything concerning them? Of what value will our words be then? Shall we wait until God's judgments fall upon the transgressor before we tell him how to avoid them? Where is our faith in the word of God? Must we see things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said? In clear, distinct rays light has come to us, showing us that the great day of the Lord is near at hand, 'even at the doors.' Let us read and understand before it is too late."—*Testimonies,* vol. 9, p. 20.

"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."—*The Great Controversy,* page 457.

Warnings of Apparent Delay

3. What are believers urged to exercise and why? Heb. 10:35-37.

NOTE.—This passage implies that there will be a seeming delay, and that the Lord will appear to tarry.

"Our Lord delays because of His long-suffering to usward, 'not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' But when we, with all the redeemed, shall stand upon the sea of glass, with harps of gold and crowns of glory, . . . we shall see how short was the waiting period of probation. . . . The Lord is willing to help us, to strengthen and bless us; but we must pass through the refining process until all the impurities in our character are burned away. Every member of the church will be subjected to the furnace, not to consume, but to purify."—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 485.

4. What command is given to the angels holding the four winds? Rev. 7:1-3.

NOTE.—"Especially should we, with unwavering faith, seek God for grace and power to be given to His people now. We do not believe that the time has fully come when He would have our liberties restricted. The prophet saw 'four angels . . . holding the four winds of the earth.' . . . Another angel, ascending from the east, cried to them, saying: 'Hurt not the earth, . . . till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.' This points out the work we have now to do."—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 717.

5. What parable represents the experience of believers while the bridegroom tarries? Matt. 25:1-13.

NOTE.—"In the parable, all the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. All had lamps and vessels for oil. For a time there was seen no difference between them. So with the church that lives just before Christ's second coming. All have a knowledge of the Scriptures. All have heard the message of Christ's near approach, and confidently expect His appearing. But as in the parable, so it is now. A time of waiting intervenes, faith is tried; and when the cry is heard, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him,' many are unready."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 408.

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."—*Ibid.,* p. 69.

6. What effect does the apparent delay have on unbelievers? 2 Peter 3:3, 4.

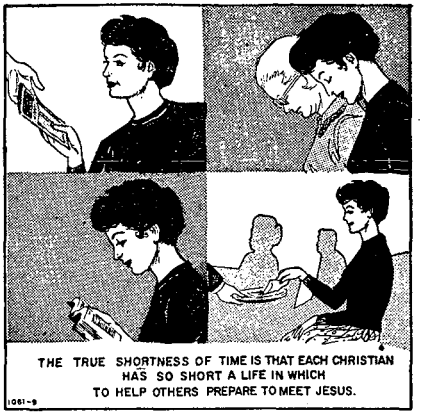
NOTE.—"The world, full of rioting, full of godless pleasure, is asleep, asleep in carnal security. Men are putting afar off the coming of the Lord. They laugh at warnings. . . . At the very time when the world is asking in scorn, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' the signs are fulfilling."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 635.

"It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan. . . .

"The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years."—*Evangelism,* page 696.

Reasons for the Delay

7. Why were the angels commanded to continue holding the four winds? Rev. 7:3.



NOTE.—"I saw four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and were on their way to accomplish it. Jesus was clothed with priestly garments. He gazed in pity on the remnant, then raised His hands, and with a voice of deep pity cried, '*My blood, Father, My blood, My blood, My blood!*' Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God, who sat upon the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. Then I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and waving something up and down in his hand, and crying with a loud voice, '*Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold!* until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.' "—*Early Writings,* page 38.

8. What great work in the world is yet to be accomplished? Matt. 24:14.

NOTE.—"Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward."—*Evangelism,* page 695.

"In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His

coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning."—*The Great Controversy,* page 458.

9. What special regard does God have for those who are unprepared for His coming? 2 Peter 3:9.

NOTE.—"God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish; but His forbearance has a limit, and when the boundary is past, there is no second probation. His wrath will go forth and He will destroy without remedy."—Ellen G. White Comments, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 7, p. 946.

Need for Watchfulness

10. Despite the apparent delay, how do God's people know that His purpose has not failed? Hab. 2:1-4.

NOTE.—"The faith that strengthened Habakkuk and all the holy and the just in those days of deep trial was the same faith that sustains God's people today. In the darkest hours, under circumstances the most forbidding, the Christian believer may keep his soul stayed upon the source of all light and power. . . . In the service of God there need be no despondency, no wavering, no fear. The Lord will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him."—*Prophets and Kings,* pages 386, 387.

"It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and the threatenings of God are alike conditional."—*Evangelism,* page 695.

11. For what reason are believers urged to be watchful? Luke 12:35-40. Compare Mark 13:33-37.

NOTE.—The message of the signs is that the end *has been* near for more than one hundred years. We are living in an emergency period of delay while God waits in mercy for His people to warn the world and prepare themselves for His return. How soon these conditions will be met only God Himself knows. Our only safety is in watching and being ready to meet Him at any time.

12. What parable warns of the danger of putting far off the second coming? Matt. 24:48-51.

NOTE.—"The evil servant . . . does not say that Christ will not come. He does not scoff at the idea of His second coming. But in his heart and by his actions and words he declares that the Lord's coming is delayed. He banishes from the minds of others the conviction that the Lord is coming quickly."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 635.

13. How should believers make use of the remaining time? Luke 19:13. Compare Matt. 24:45, 46.

NOTE.—"Belief in the near coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven will not cause the true Christian to become neglectful and careless of the ordinary business of life. . . . Those who flatter themselves that careless inattention to the things of this life is an evidence of their spirituality and of their separation from the world are under a great deception."—*Testimonies,* vol. 4, p. 309.

"Because the time is apparently extended, many have become careless and indifferent in regard to their words and actions. They do not realize their danger and do not see and understand the mercy of our God in lengthening their probation, that they may have time to form characters for the future, immortal life. Every moment is of the highest value."—*Ibid.,* p. 306.

Questions for Meditation

1. If Christ should come today would He find me asleep, or awake?
2. Am I determined to remain faithful to my Lord no matter how long He may delay His return?

The Church and Fulfilling Signs

MEMORY VERSE: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." Heb. 10:23, 24.

STUDY HELPS: "Your Bible and You," pages 457-474; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of February 23.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3.	☐
Monday: Questions 4-6; read from Study Helps.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 7-9.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 10, 11; read from Study Helps.	☐
Thursday: Questions 12, 13.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. The Church's Peril

1. Indifference. Luke 21:34, 35.
2. Carelessness. Matt. 24:48-51.
3. Somnolence. Matt. 25:5.

II. The Church's Duty

4. To awake. Rom. 13:11, 12.
5. To seek revival. Rev. 3:15-18.
6. To complete its unfinished task. Rev. 14:6.

III. The Church's Responsibility

7. To God: worship. Rev. 14:7.
8. To fellow members: brotherliness. Heb. 10:23-25.
9. To the world: service. Matt. 25:31-40.

IV. The Church's Objective

10. To "grow up into Him." 2 Peter 3:18; Eph. 4:15.
11. To become like Christ. 1 John 3:2, 3.

V. The Church's Reward

12. Eternal salvation. Matt. 24:13.
13. Infinite inheritance. Rev. 21:7.

THE LESSON

Introduction

In the foregoing lessons, study has been given to some of the outstanding signs of Christ's imminent return. Abundant evidence has been provided to show that the great Bible prophecies concerning the last days of this world's history are now meeting their fulfillment. But recognition of the promised signs is of little value unless such knowledge leads to appropriate action. Only as these divine warnings are heeded can they prove a blessing to the church. It is possible for Christians to become so familiar with the omens of the advent that their urgent challenge will be muted. Even ministers, regarding these omens as too well worn for sermon material, may cease to preach about them. Beyond question, the most vital need of the remnant church today is

to be moved by the message it was called into existence to proclaim. By a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit it must sense anew the mighty meaning of the signs of the times and be led thereby to full repentance of sin and total dedication to its appointed task of giving God's last message to mankind.

The Church's Peril

1. What warning did Christ leave on record for those who should see the signs of His return? Luke 21:34, 35.

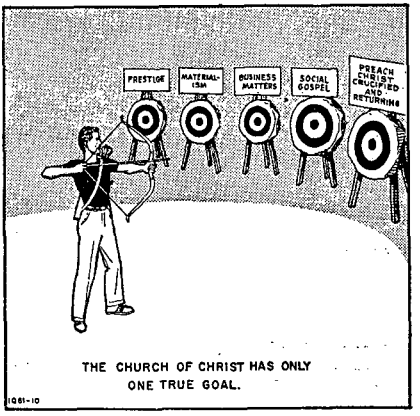
NOTE.—At the very time when the church should be most alert it will be in greatest danger of indifference through self-indulgence and overconcern with the affairs of this life. Another translation renders this passage thus: "Be on your guard lest your minds should ever be dulled by debauches or drunkenness or anxieties of life, and lest 'That Day' should come suddenly upon you, like a snare. For come it will upon all who are living upon the face of the whole earth." —*The Twentieth Century New Testament.*

2. What other peril will confront the church in the last days? Matt. 24: 48-51.

NOTE.—The words "my Lord delayeth His coming" fall from the lips of those who have become careless about His return. Far from yearning for Him to come in glory, they would rather He put off His advent indefinitely. It would interfere with their plans. They are too wedded to the world to want to leave it. Strife in the church is a sure indication of a careless attitude toward the Lord's return.

3. In His parable of the ten virgins, how did Christ picture the attitude of His people in the days immediately preceding His return? Matt. 25:5.

NOTE.—The Master's words, "They all slumbered and slept," suggest that His entire church will be in danger of sleeping through the greatest crisis of the ages. And



THE CHURCH OF CHRIST HAS ONLY ONE TRUE GOAL.

when the great awakening comes—as come it will—there will be no time to supply the lack of previous spiritual preparation.

"Here [Matthew 25] is brought to view the church living in the last days, the same that is pointed out in the close of chapter 24. In this parable their [the believers'] experience is illustrated by the incidents of an Eastern marriage. . . . 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. . . . '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. Yet in the night of trial the latter seemed to lose, to some extent, their zeal and devotion. The halfhearted and superficial could no longer lean upon the faith of their brethren. Each must stand or fall for himself."—*The Great Controversy,* pages 393-395.

The Church's Duty

4. What should all now do? Rom. 13:11, 12.

NOTE.—When the signs of Christ's return are as clear as they are today, it is surely "high time to awake out of sleep," become alert to the tremendous issues at stake, and prepare ourselves, by complete transforma-

tion of life, to participate in the coming kingdom of righteousness.

"We are living in the closing scenes of this earth's history. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. The hours of probation are fast passing. We have no time—not a moment—to lose. Let us not be found sleeping on guard."—*Testimonies,* vol. 8, p. 252.

5. What urgent counsel has Christ left on record for His remnant church? Rev. 3:15-18.

NOTE.—Revival is the dominant need of the church today. It needs to repent of its pride, vainglory, and self-seeking, and in humility of spirit seek the "gold" of heaven, the garment of Christ's righteousness, and the vision of the converted soul.

"God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children.

"A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend."—*Selected Messages,* b. 1, p. 128.

6. To what task should the church be devoting its entire energy and zeal as the end of time approaches? Rev. 14:6.

NOTE.—No somnolent, careless, indifferent body of believers could compass the global enterprise envisioned here. No wonder Christ urges His people to awake! No wonder He counsels them to open their eyes and measure the mighty task to be accomplished ere He can come again.

The Church's Responsibility

7. What does God expect of His zealous church? Rev. 14:7.

NOTE.—The first responsibility of the remnant church to God is to "worship Him" and lead others likewise to "give glory to Him."

"The success of the gospel message does not depend upon learned speeches, eloquent testimonies, or deep arguments. It depends upon the simplicity of the message and its adaptation to the souls that are hungering for the bread of life. . . .

"Thousands can be reached in the most simple and humble way. The most intellectual, those who are looked upon as the world's most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words of one who loves God, and who can speak of that love as naturally as the worldling speaks of the things that interest him most deeply.

"Often the words well prepared and studied have but little influence. But the true, honest expression of a son or daughter of God, spoken in natural simplicity, has power to unbolt the door to hearts that have long been closed against Christ and His love."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* pages 231, 232.

8. What attitude should members of the remnant church manifest toward each other? Heb. 10:23-25.

NOTE.—The Revised Standard Version renders this beautiful passage as follows: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

The love of Christ is to fill every heart as each one seeks to encourage others and stir them up "to love and good works." Not less and less, but more and more as the Day draws near.

9. How should the remnant church relate itself to the needs of mankind? Matt. 25:31-40.

NOTE.—"Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. . . .

"As you open your door to Christ's needy and suffering ones, you are welcoming unseen angels. You invite the companionship of heavenly beings. They bring a sacred atmosphere of joy and peace. They come with praises upon their lips, and an answering strain is heard in heaven. Every deed of mercy makes music there. The Father from His throne numbers the unselfish workers among His most precious treasures."—*The Desire of Ages,* pages 638, 639.

The Church's Objective

10. While the church of the last days calls men to worship God, while it seeks to reveal the love of Christ to fellow members and the needy world, what should be its own spiritual objective? 2 Peter 3:18; Eph. 4:15.

NOTE.—Little by little, day by day, all who love the Lord in sincerity, all who see the signs of His coming and long for His appearing, will grow in grace and be changed by the constant presence and power of the Holy Spirit into the very likeness of the Master.

11. How does the apostle John describe this ultimate aim of every true believer? 1 John 3:2, 3.

NOTE.—"Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement." —*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 214.

"I saw how this grace could be obtained. Go to your closet, and there alone plead with God: 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.' Be in earnest, be sincere. Fervent prayer availeth much. Jacoblike, wrestle in prayer. Agonize. Jesus, in the garden, sweat great drops of blood; you must make an effort." —*Ibid.,* vol. 1, p. 158.

The Church's Reward

12. What will be the reward of those who "endure unto the end"? Matt. 24:13.

NOTE.—The reward will be an eternal salvation. See John 3:15, 16. It will last forever.

"These trials of life are God's workmen to remove the impurities, infirmities, and roughness from our characters, and fit us for the society of pure, heavenly angels in glory. But as we pass through these trials, as the fires of affliction kindle upon us, we must not keep the eye on the fire which is seen, but let the eye of faith fasten upon the things unseen, the eternal inheritance, the immortal life, the eternal weight of glory; and while we do this the fire will not consume us, but only remove the dross, and we shall come forth seven times purified, bearing the impress of the Divine."—*Testimonies,* vol. 1, pp. 706, 707.

13. How much will the future inheritance include? Rev. 21:7. Compare Matt. 19:29.

NOTE.—The inheritance will be an infinite one. As "heirs of God" the saved will be "joint heirs" with Christ, sharing equally with their blessed Lord and beloved Elder Brother.

"All the worth and greatness of this life is derived from its connection with heaven and the future, immortal life. God's everlasting arm encircles the soul that turns to Him for aid, however feeble that soul may be. . . . But the soul that lives for God, unmoved by censure, unperverted by applause, shall abide forever with Him. The City of God will open its golden gates to receive him who learned while on earth to lean on God for guidance and wisdom, for comfort and hope amid loss and affliction. The songs of the angels will welcome him there, and for him the tree of life will yield its fruits."—*Testimonies,* vol. 4, p. 328.

Questions for Meditation

1. Am I fully awake to the meaning of the great issues of this mighty hour?
2. Am I throwing myself and my all wholeheartedly into the finishing of God's work in the earth?
3. Have I accepted God's invitation to be His child and thus become a "joint heir" with Christ of all the riches of heaven?

Lesson 11, for March 18, 1961

Preparation for His Coming

MEMORY VERSE: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:44.

STUDY HELPS: "Early Writings," pages 111-116; "The Great Controversy," pages 309-316 (last half of chapter 17); "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of March 2.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Read from Study Helps.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-5.	☐	Thursday: Read from Study Helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 6-8.	☐	Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 9-13.	☐		

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. The Need for Personal Preparation

1. The end will come suddenly. Mark 13:32-36; Luke 21:34.
2. Jesus' personal warning. Matt. 24:42, 44.

II. The Time to Prepare

3. The significance of the signs. Luke 21:28, 36.
4. Beware of scoffers. 2 Peter 3:3-7.
5. Now is the time. Rom. 13:11.

III. How to Prepare

6. "Put ye on the Lord." Rom. 13:14; Gal. 2:20.
7. The Lord's gracious invitation. Isa. 1:16-20; Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:14, 17.
8. Evidences of acceptance. Acts 2:37-39.

IV. Living in Expectant Preparedness

9. Soberness, watchfulness, and love enjoined. 1 Peter 4:7-10; 2 Peter 3:14.
10. "Redeeming the time." Eph. 5:15, 16.
11. "Kept by the power of God." 1 Peter 1:3-5.
12. The spirit of thanksgiving. Col. 1:12, 13.
13. Heavenly citizenship now. Phil. 3:20, 21.

Introduction

"God's message for the inhabitants of earth today is, 'Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.' Matthew 24:44. The conditions prevailing in society, and especially in the great cities of the nations, proclaim in thunder tones that the hour of God's judgment is come and that the end of all things earthly is at hand. We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another—fire, and flood, and earthquake, with war and bloodshed. We are not to be surprised at this time by events both great and decisive; for the angel of mercy cannot remain much longer to shelter the impenitent." —*Prophets and Kings,* page 278.

The Need for Personal Preparation

1. Why is it necessary to live in a state of preparedness for the coming of Christ? Mark 13:32-36; Luke 21:34.

NOTE.—"Take heed to yourselves in case your hearts get overpowered by dissipation and drunkenness and worldly anxieties, and so that Day catches you suddenly like a trap." Luke 21:34, Moffatt. Copyright, Harper and Brothers. Used by permission.

2. For what reasons does the Lord urge us to watch and be ready? Matt. 24:42, 44.

The Time to Prepare

3. As the children of God see the fast-fulfilling signs, what should their attitude be? Luke 21:28, 36.

4. In the last days, what particular class of adversaries should we expect to encounter? 2 Peter 3:3-7.

5. Why is it especially necessary for believers to maintain a vigil of constant spiritual wakefulness? Rom. 13:11.

NOTE.—"We must be much in prayer if we would make progress in the divine life. When the message of truth was first proclaimed, how much we prayed. How often was the voice of intercession heard in the chamber, in the barn, in the orchard, or the grove. Frequently we spent hours in earnest prayer, two or three together claiming the promise; often the sound of weeping was heard and then the voice of thanksgiving and the song of praise. Now the day of God is nearer than when we first believed, and we should be more earnest, more zealous, and fervent than in those early days. Our perils are greater now than then. Souls are more hardened. We need now to be imbued with the spirit of Christ, and we should not rest until we receive it."—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, pp. 161, 162.

How to Prepare

6. As we face the dissolution of the present world, what specific preparation should be made by God's waiting children? Rom. 13:14; Gal. 2:20.

NOTE.—"The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit."—*Messages to Young People,* page 157.

7. In God's gracious invitations to repent, what dominant key word do we notice? Isa. 1:16-20; Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:14, 17.

NOTE.—"Here are the promises, plain and definite, rich and full; but they are all upon conditions. If you comply with the conditions, can you not trust the Lord to fulfill

His word? Let these blessed promises, set in the framework of faith, be placed in memory's halls. Not one of them will fail. All that God hath spoken He will do. 'He is faithful that promised.' "—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 630.

"It is true that repentance does precede the forgiveness of sins; for it is only the broken and contrite heart that will feel the need of a Saviour. But must the sinner wait till he has repented before he can come to Jesus? Is repentance to be made an obstacle between the sinner and the Saviour?

"The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' Matthew 11:28. It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance. Peter made the matter clear in his statement to the Israelites when he said, 'Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' Acts 5:31. We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ."—*Steps to Christ,* page 26.

8. What evidences of the work of God's Spirit upon the hearts of men will be seen when they respond to His call? Acts 2:37-39.

NOTE.—"Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. . . . Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. They have obeyed the command: 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing.' And to them is fulfilled the promise: '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."—*Testimonies,* vol. 6, p. 91.

"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. . . . 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.' "—*The Great Controversy,* page 390.

Living in Expectant Preparedness

9. How will the waiting child of God demonstrate his expectation of the coming of His Lord? 1 Peter 4: 7-10; 2 Peter 3:14.

NOTE.—"The apostle's [Peter's] words were written for the instruction of believers in every age, and they have a special significance for those who live at the time when 'the end of all things is at hand.' His exhortations and warnings, and his words of faith and courage, are needed by every soul who would maintain his faith 'steadfast unto the end.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 518.

"It is now that we must keep ourselves and our children unspotted from the world. It is now that we must wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is now that we must overcome pride, passion, and spiritual slothful-

ness. It is now that we must awake and make determined effort for symmetry of character. 'Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.' "—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, pp. 215, 216.

10. In view of the nearness of the end, how should our time be utilized? Eph. 5:15, 16.

NOTE.—"Make the very most of your time, for these are evil days." Verse 16, Moffatt. Copyright, Harper and Brothers. Used by permission.

11. Through what means will we be kept while awaiting our promised inheritance? 1 Peter 1:3-5.

12. What reason for thankfulness does the child of God have? Col. 1:12, 13.

13. As we wait in expectancy for our Lord's return, where should our spiritual citizenship be now? Phil. 3:20, 21.

NOTE.—In some Bibles the marginal rendering of "conversation" is "citizenship."

"Do we believe with all the heart that Christ is soon coming and that we are now having the last message of mercy that is ever to be given to a guilty world? Is our example what it should be? . . . Those who believe the important truths that we profess, should act out their faith. There is too much seeking after amusements and things to take the attention in this world; the mind is left to run too much upon dress, and the tongue is engaged too often in light and trifling conversation, which gives the lie to our profession, for our conversation is not in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour."—*Early Writings,* page 111.

"Citizens of heaven will make the best citizens of earth. A correct view of our duty to God leads to clear perceptions of our duty to our fellow men."—*Messages to Young People,* page 329.

Questions for Meditation

1. Is my life a daily manifestation of sober watchfulness?
2. What place do worry and anxiety about the future have in the life of a Christian?
3. What am I doing to "redeem the time"?

Lesson 12, for March 25, 1961

The New World Order

MEMORY VERSE: "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13.

STUDY HELPS: "The Great Controversy," chapter 42; "Prophets and Kings," pages 729-733; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary," on Scripture references; "The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary;" Lesson Help in "Review and Herald" of March 9.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3; read from Study Helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 4-9.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 10-14.	☐
Wednesday: Read from Study Helps.	☐
Thursday: Read from Study Helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. The Glorious Tomorrow

1. God's original purpose for the earth. Isa. 45:18.
2. Events connected with the end of the present order. 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52; Rev. 20:5, 9; 2 Peter 3:10-12.
3. Promises of a new order. 2 Peter 3:13; Matt. 5:5; Prov. 11:31.

II. A New Heaven and Earth

4. Beyond human comprehension. 1 Cor. 2:9.
5. The earth changed. Isa. 65:17-19; 35:1, 2.
6. Satisfying labor. Isa. 65:21, 22.
7. Peaceful, contented living. Isa. 65:24, 25; 32:18; 33:24; 35:1, 2.
8. The capital city and the throne of God. Rev. 21:1-4; 22:1-5.
9. Worship privileges. Isa. 66:22, 23.

III. God's Purpose Fulfilled

10. The "called, and chosen, and faithful." Rev. 17:14, last part.
11. Joint heirs with Christ. Rom. 8:14, 17.
12. The secret of the new relationship. Gal. 3:29; 2:20; Phil. 4:13.
13. The present responsibility and future hope. 1 John 3:1-3.
14. Perfect communion. Rev. 22:4.

THE LESSON

Introduction

"The great plan of redemption results in fully bringing back the world into God's favor. All that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth is redeemed, to be the eternal abode of the obedient. For six thousand years Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God's original purpose in its creation is accomplished. 'The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.' Daniel 7:18." —*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 342.

The Glorious Tomorrow

1. For what purpose did God originally create the earth? Isa. 45:18.

NOTE.—"God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. The Lord 'formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited.' Isaiah 45:18. That purpose will be fulfilled, when, renewed by the power of God, and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal abode of the redeemed."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 67.

2. What series of events will bring to an end the present world order? 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52; Rev. 20:5, 9; 2 Peter 3:10-12.

3. What definite promises have been made concerning a new, righteous world order? 2 Peter 3:13; Matt. 5:5; Prov. 11:31. Compare Isa. 65:17.

A New Heaven and Earth

4. Why is it impossible adequately to describe the new heaven and earth? 1 Cor. 2:9.

NOTE.—"Even in this life we may catch glimpses of His presence and may taste the joy of communion with heaven, but the fullness of its joy and blessing will be reached in the hereafter. Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 602.

5. What word picture did Isaiah paint of the new earth? Isa. 65:17-19; 35:1, 2.

NOTE.—"In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called 'a country.' Hebrews 11:14-16. 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."—*The Great Controversy,* page 675.

6. In what lines of activity will the redeemed engage? Isa. 65:21, 22.

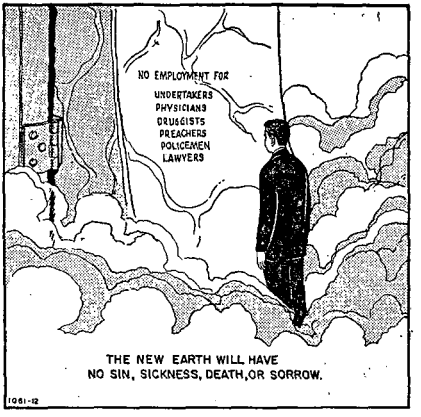
NOTE.—"In the earth made new, the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. 'They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.' Isaiah 65:21, 22." —*Prophets and Kings,* pages 730, 731.

7. How are the living conditions in the new earth described? Isa. 65:24, 25; 32:18; 33:24; 35:1, 2.

NOTE.—"Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. There will be no more tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning."—*The Great Controversy,* page 676.

8. Where will God's dwelling place be, and how is it portrayed by John the revelator? Rev. 21:1-4; 22:1-5.

NOTE.—"None will need or desire repose. There will be no weariness in doing the will of God and offering praise to His name. We



shall ever feel the freshness of the morning and shall ever be far from its close. . . .The light of the sun will be superseded by a radiance which is not painfully dazzling, yet which immeasurably surpasses the brightness of our noontide. The glory of God and the Lamb floods the Holy City with unfading light. The redeemed walk in the sunless glory of perpetual day."—*The Great Controversy,* page 676.

9. How often will the redeemed worship before the Lord? Isa. 66: 22, 23.

God's Purpose Fulfilled

10. What terms are used to designate those who will be with Christ in heaven? Rev. 17:14, last part.

11. Through what relationship do we inherit the promises made to God's chosen ones? Rom. 8:14, 17.

12. By what means and through whom do we become heirs to heaven? Gal. 3:29; 2:20; Phil. 4:13.

13. What assuring promises are made to those who seek this promised sonship? 1 John 3:1-3.

NOTE.—"To everyone who offers himself to the Lord for service, withholding nothing, is given power for the attainment of measureless results. For these God will do great things. He will work upon the minds of men so that, even in this world, there shall be seen in their lives a fulfillment of the promise of the future state."—*The Ministry of Healing,* page 160.

14. What will bring supreme satisfaction to the saved? Rev. 22:4.

NOTE.—There will be perfect communion between God and man, unbroken through eternal ages. "Transcending every other joy of the redeemed will be the continual presence of Jesus. And nothing in all the glory land will afford such enduring happiness as this. Golden streets, pearly gates, beautiful homes, exquisite scenery, would indeed afford little lasting satisfaction without this priceless privilege.

" 'Oh, heaven without my Saviour
Would be no heaven to me:
Dim were the walls of jasper,
Rayless the crystal sea.'

"But He *will* be there, for 'they shall see His face.' . . . Beloved of all His people, He will 'lead them unto living fountains of waters,' studying with them the mysteries of the universe and helping them to perceive ever more clearly the length and breadth and height and depth of the wisdom and love of God."—A. S. Maxwell, *Your Bible and You,* pages 472, 473.

Questions for Meditation

1. In my present spiritual state, would I fit in as a citizen of the new world order?
2. In view of the inheritance that awaits me, how should I regard the trials of this life?
3. Am I letting the blessed hope of His soon coming purify my heart and life?

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING
March 25, 1961

The overflow this quarter goes to the Middle East Division. This is a field that is always of interest to Bible students, for it is the setting for most of the Bible stories. There are twelve countries and more than half a dozen territories in this division. One hundred million inhabitants are divided into eight large groups, with the majority speaking Arabic. Islam is the religion of the masses. It is a vast mission field indeed.

The special projects to benefit from the overflow this quarter are:

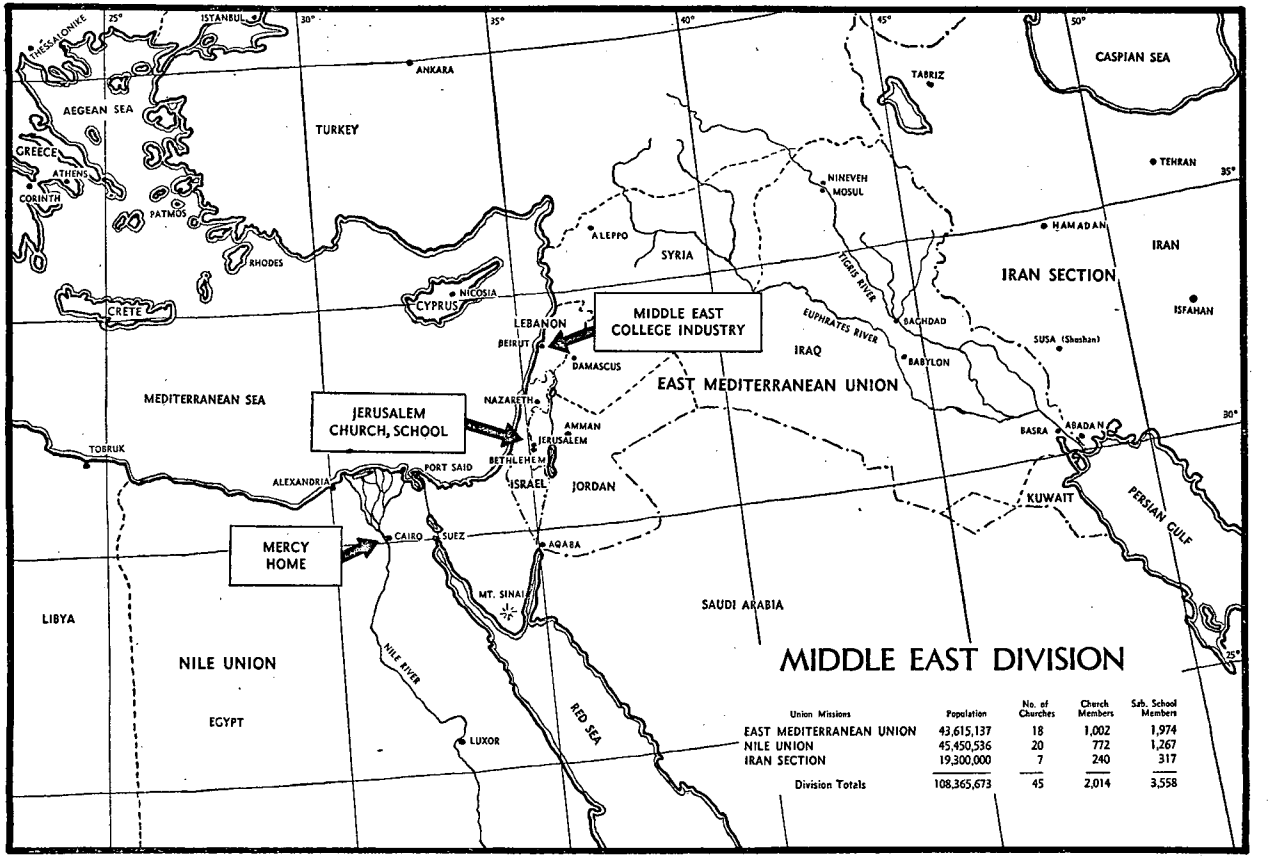
1. Construction of a church and school in Jerusalem.
2. Rebuilding of the Mercy Orphanage Home in Cairo, Egypt.
3. A new industry for Middle East College.

These are all worthy projects, and as you listen to the mission stories from Sabbath to Sabbath, we believe that you will earnestly plan to do all you can to help strengthen and advance the work of God in the old Bible lands by a liberal offering on March 25.

LESSONS FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1961

Sabbath school members who have failed to receive a senior *Lesson Quarterly* for second quarter of 1961 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first lesson. The subject of the quarter's lessons is "Righteousness by Faith in Christ." The title of the first lesson is "Righteousness." The Memory Verse is Jeremiah 23:6. The texts to be studied are:

Ques. 1. Ps. 119:142.
Ques. 2. Ps. 145:17; 9:8.
Ques. 3. Heb. 1:8, 9.
Ques. 4. Mal. 4:2; Jer. 33:15, 16.
Ques. 5. Isa. 64:6.
Ques. 6. Rom. 3:10; Jer. 13:23.
Ques. 7. Jer. 23:6.
Ques. 8. Rom. 5:17.
Ques. 9. 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21.
Ques. 10. Dan. 4:27; Prov. 12:28; 10:2.
Ques. 11. Rom. 5:21; Ps. 15:1-5.
Ques. 12. Acts 10:35.
Ques. 13. Isa. 32:17.
Ques. 14. Matt. 5:6.



Union Missions	Population	No. of Churches	Church Members	Sab. School Members
EAST MEDITERRANEAN UNION	43,615,137	18	1,002	1,974
NILE UNION	45,450,536	20	772	1,267
IRAN SECTION	19,300,000	7	240	317
Division Totals	108,365,673	45	2,014	3,558