SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON QUARTERLY

ELLIS DUDGEON

SELECTED LESSONS FROM THE PSALMS

SENIOR DIVISION, No. 276, SECOND QUARTER, 1964

THE BLESSING OF DAILY STUDY

"There should be a living, growing interest in storing the mind with Bible truth. The precious knowledge thus gained will build a barrier about the soul."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 36.

Let us resolve to be more diligent in the study of His Word and "set apart a little time each day for the study of the Sabbath school lesson."—*Ibid.,* p. 41.

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. Introduction to the Psalms
2. Nature and Revelation Reveal God
3. "The Lord Is My Light and My Salvation"
4. "Blessed Are the Pure in Heart"
5. Salvation Out of Suffering
6. Forgiveness for the Repentant Sinner
7. The Two Ways
8. A Song of Utter Faith
9. The Law of God
10. Man's Brevity, God's Eternity
11. From Doubt to Triumphant Faith
12. Thanksgiving for God's Loving-Kindness
13. "Give Thanks Unto the Lord"

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Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly

SELECTED LESSONS FROM THE PSALMS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The psalms are the expression of profound thoughts and hopes directed to the Eternal Father, the One whom the psalmist also blesses for personal and national mercies. This sublime poetry contains glowing testimonies to the perfection of God, to His love, His power, His faithfulness, and His righteousness. The relationship of the psalms to Christ, and the fulfillment in the New Testament of prophecies contained in the Old, are a subject rich in fascination and infinite in spiritual reward.

The lessons for this quarter are not a study of the entire book of Psalms, but simply a contemplation of certain psalms selected for their devotional and reflective study value. May they prove to be a spiritual blessing to all.

Lesson 1, for April 4, 1964

Introduction to the Psalms

MEMORY VERSE: "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms." Ps. 95:1, 2.

STUDY HELP: "S.D.A. Bible Commentary," vol. 3, pp. 615-629.

AIM: To provide an introduction to the Psalter as a basis for a more meaningful study of individual psalms.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1, 2; learn memory verse.	☐
Monday: Questions 3-6.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 7-9.	☐
Wednesday: Question 10; read from study help.	☐
Thursday: Questions 11, 12; finish reading study help.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. The Place of Psalms in the Canon

1. In third division of Hebrew Scriptures. Luke 24:44.
2. Meaning of "Psalms."

II. Authorship of the Psalms

3. Multiple authorship. Psalms 3; 81; 90.
4. David's qualifications. 1 Sam. 16: 15-23.
5. David's musical talents. 1 Chron. 23:5.
6. David's musical skill. 2 Sam. 23:1.

III. Characteristics of the Psalms

7. Written under varied circumstances.
8. Written in literary form of lyric poetry.
9. Of varied types.
10. Recurring theme. Ps. 28:1, 2, 6, 7; 34:3-7.

IV. The Psalms in New Testament Reference

11. Frequently quoted.
12. Inspiration ascribed to. Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16; 4:24, 25.

THE LESSON

Introduction

"The psalms of David pass through the whole range of experience, from the depths of conscious guilt and self-condemnation to the loftiest faith and the most exalted communing with God. His life record declares that sin can bring only shame and woe, but that God's love and mercy can reach to the deepest depths, that faith will lift up the repenting soul to share the adoption of the sons of God. Of all the assurances which His Word contains, it is one of the strongest testimonies to the faithfulness, the justice, and the covenant mercy of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 754.

The Place of Psalms in the Canon

1. Into what three sections did the Hebrews divide their sacred writings? Luke 24:44.

NOTE.—"The Hebrews divided their sacred writings (our OT) into three divisions: the Law (*Torah*), the Prophets (*Nebi'im*), and the Writings (*Kethubim*) (see Vol. 1, p. 37). The division called Writings included the three poetical books, Psalms, Proverbs, and Job; the Five Rolls (*Megilloth*), The Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther; and the historical books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. Since Psalms was considered the most important of the Writings, that title was often made to stand for the group (by the figure of speech called synecdoche); thus the Hebrews frequently spoke of the three divisions of their sacred writings as 'the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms' (see Luke 24:44)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* vol. 3, p. 615.

2. What is the meaning of the title "Psalms"?

ANSWER: "The book of Psalms, or the Psalter, takes its English title from the LXX [The Septuagint. The Greek version of the OT—so called from the legend that the translation was made by 70 emissaries from Jerusalem for Ptolemy II, about 270 B.C.] title of the collection, *Psalmoi,* the plural of *psalmos,* which designates a song to be sung to the musical accompaniment of stringed instruments. One manuscript has the title *Psalterion,* from which the word 'Psalter' is derived."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* vol. 3, p. 615.

Authorship of the Psalms

3. What can be said of the authorship of the psalms? See the superscriptions to Psalms 3; 81; 90.

NOTE.—"The psalms are the inspired productions of a number of authors, the whole collection having been brought together in its final form possibly by Ezra, Nehemiah, or some of the scribes immediately following their period. . . . Our oldest indications regarding the origin of the Psalter are represented in the titles, or superscriptions, that appear at the beginning of two thirds of the psalms. . . .

"Eight names of persons occurring in the superscriptions to the psalms appear to be the names of authors, contributors, compilers, musicians, or others associated with the composition, compilation, and use of the sacred lyrics. The names are David, Asaph, Korah, Moses, Heman, Ethan, Solomon, and Jeduthun. . . .

"About one third of the psalms bear no superscription whatsoever, and therefore are entirely anonymous (they are called orphan psalms). It has been conjectured that among the composers of the psalms were such other OT worthies as Ezra, Isaiah,

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Haggai."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* vol. 3, pp. 615-617.

4. What qualifications placed David in the royal court early in his career? 1 Sam. 16:15-23.

NOTE.—"David was a poet and a musician in his own right (1 Sam. 16:15-23; 2 Sam. 23:1; Amos 6:5). He was a man of deep affection, of outstanding magnanimity (2 Sam. 1:19-27; 3:33, 34), and of great faith and deep feeling, which found expression in enthusiastic worship of Jehovah."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* vol. 3, p. 616.

5. What else is said of David's musical talent? 1 Chron. 23:5.

6. Because of his literary and musical productions, by what title was David known? 2 Sam. 23:1.

Characteristics of the Psalms

7. Name some of the varied circumstances under which the psalms were written. See superscriptions to the following psalms: 3; 18; 30; 34; 51; 52; 54; 56; 57; 59.

NOTE.—"David's acquaintance with the world of nature, his knowledge of the law, his tutelage in the school of adversity, of sorrow, and of temptation, his years of intimate fellowship with God, his colorful life as king in Israel, his assurance from God that He would raise up an everlasting King upon the throne of David—these experiences equipped the shepherd-king, the son of Jesse, to sing the sweetest and saddest songs of the human soul in its thirst for God."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* vol. 3, p. 616.

8. In what literary form were the psalms written?

ANSWER: Poetry.

NOTE.—"The significant feature of Hebrew poetry is the rhythm of thought called parallelism, or balanced structure, the setting of line against line in a variety of patterns. This peculiar structure has been likened to the ebb and flow of the tide, and, in the language of a German writer, to 'the heaving and sinking of the troubled heart.' There is something about it that transcends nationality. It seems to be indigenous to the human heart. And the Bible reader may take satisfaction in the fact that this Oriental metrical form loses little if any of its validity and beauty in the English of the [King James Version], as he grows used to recurrence of phrase after phrase, marshaled according to a wide range of variations in balance."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* vol. 3, p. 622.

9. Name and give examples of various types of psalms.

ANSWER:

1. Nature. Psalms 8; 19; 29; 104.
2. Historical and National. Psalms 46; 68; 79; 106; 107.
3. Didactic (instructional). Psalms 1; 15; 35; 71.
4. Messianic. Psalms 2; 22; 69; 72; 110.
5. Penitential. Psalms 6; 32; 38; 51; 102.
6. Imprecatory (denunciatory). Psalms 35; 52; 69; 83; 109.
7. Prayer, Praise, and Adoration. Psalms 16; 55; 65; 86; 89.
8. Pilgrim. Psalms 120 to 134.
9. Alphabetic, or Acrostic. Psalms 9; 10; 25; 34; 119.

10. What is the recurring theme of the psalms? Ps. 28:1, 2, 6, 7; 34:3-7.

NOTE.—"Man is in trouble—God gives relief. This is the theme—universal in its appeal—of the book of Psalms. In these sacred poems we hear the cry, not only of the Hebrew, but of universal man, ascending to God for help, and see the hand of Omnipotence reaching down to bring relief. No wonder that for centuries, for Jew and Gentile alike, the Psalter has supplied material for private prayer and for public devotion; it has served with equal satisfaction as the formal liturgy for the Hebrew Temple and synagogue, as the hymnbook of the Christian church, and as the prayer

book of the solitary child of God, regardless of race or creed. . . .

"There are psalms for every mood, for every need: psalms for the disappointed, for the discouraged, for the aged, for the despairing, for the sick, for the sinner; and psalms for the the youthful, for the vigorous, for the hopeful, for the faithful, believing child of God, for the triumphant saint. . . . And throughout the whole collection, God is exalted as the solution to all man's problems, the ultimate All in all: our hope, our confidence, our strength, our triumph—incarnate in the Messiah, whose coming brings redemption and ushers in the universal and eternal reign of righteousness."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* vol. 3, pp. 619-621.

The Psalms in New Testament Reference

11. What shows the importance with which New Testament writers regarded the messages of the psalms? Luke 20:42; Acts 1:16, 20; 13:33; Heb. 4:7.

NOTE.—"Christians have to a degree followed the pattern set by Judaism. Jesus of Nazareth quoted more frequently from Psalms and from Isaiah than from any other OT books. No other OT book is so frequently cited in the NT as the book of Psalms, with the possible exception of Isaiah."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* vol. 3, p. 620.

> "Well, says one, the calls keep coming to give to the cause. I am weary of giving. Are you? Then let me ask, Are you weary of receiving from God's beneficent hand?"—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 133.

12. How did these writers express their confidence in the divine inspiration of the psalms? Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16; 4:24, 25.

For Meditation

1. Does my religious devotion allow moments to praise God for obvious blessings, and do I respond with the "whole heart" to these countless unmerited gifts?

2. Do I find that for me there is no greater blessing than to be in God's house with His people, and no greater calamity than to be cut off from this privilege?

Lesson 2, for April 11, 1964

Nature and Revelation Reveal God

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 19.

MEMORY VERSE: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer." Ps. 19:14.

STUDY HELPS: "The Desire of Ages," pages 307-310; "Education," pages 99-101; "The Ministry of Healing," pages 410-418; "Steps to Christ," pages 9-11; "Testimonies," vol. 8, pp. 256-262, 319-328; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary," on Psalm 19; selected nature psalms: Psalms 8; 29; 104.

AIM: To show that nature and revelation both lead to acknowledgment of God and love for Him.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey; learn memory verse.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-7; begin reading study helps.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8, 9; read further from study helps.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 10, 11; read further from study helps.	☐
Thursday: Questions 12-14; finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. God's Glory Revealed in Nature

1. The witness of the heavens. Ps. 19:1.
2. Continuous nature of the witness. V. 2.
3. Understanding the witness. Vs. 3, 4, first part.
4. The sun as a supreme witness. Vs. 4 (last part), 5, 6.

II. God's Glory Revealed in His Law

5. The witness of the law. V. 7.
6. The inclusiveness of the law. Vs. 7-10.
7. The law as a converting and educating power. V. 7.
8. The ministry of the law in changing man's nature. V. 8.
9. The permanence of the law. V. 9, first part.
10. The righteousness of the law. V. 9, last part.
11. The desirability of the law. V. 10.

III. Application to Character and Conduct

12. The blessing of reward. V. 11.
13. Prayer for deliverance from mistakes and presumption. Vs. 12, 13.
14. Concluding prayer. V. 14.

See note to question 5 for the sense in which "law" is used in this lesson.

THE LESSON

Introduction

Psalm 19 is perhaps the best known of the nature psalms. It is a grateful meditation on the revelation of God in nature and in His law, and its motto might well be, "Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love."—*Steps to Christ,* page 9. Among the Hebrews, nature was never an end in itself, but nature pointed them to the Creator and led them to praise the power and majesty of the Creator. The psalm was composed by David, who as a shepherd lad with his sheep on the Judean hills spent many hours under the open sky, praising God for His goodness.

God's Glory Revealed in Nature

1. Of what do the heavens testify? Ps. 19:1. Compare Rom. 1:19, 20.

NOTE.—"Wisdom, power, skill, benevolence—[are] the things that constitute God's glory. A glimpse at the open sky with the naked eye is sufficient to impress upon the beholder a sense of the glory of God. How much greater is that revelation when the heavens are scrutinized through modern high-powered telescopes."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 19:1. "It is as though the word 'glory' were written in capital letters across the very heavens and the firmament."—H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms,* page 179.

"The works of creation testify of God's power and greatness. . . . Those who take the Written Word as their counselor will find in science an aid to understand God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 116.

The contemplation of nature should always lead the Christian to look beyond nature—that which was created—to God,

the Creator. "God's handiwork in nature is not God Himself in nature. . . . While nature is an expression of God's thought, it is not nature, but the God of nature, that is to be exalted."—*The Ministry of Healing,* page 413.

2. How continuous is the witness of nature to the goodness and power of God? Ps. 19:2.

3. Although creation does not speak audibly, how far has its message extended? Verses 3, 4, first part.

NOTE.—The word "where" in this verse is a supplied word; it does not occur in the original Hebrew. "The idea is that, despite the fact that the heavens have a language of their own, . . . their voice is inaudible; it does not speak to the ear, but to the understanding heart."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 19:3.

The word "line" means a "measuring line," used to fix boundaries. The world-wide extent of the proclamation of the story of creation is indicated. In Romans 10:18 the apostle quotes part of this verse to illustrate the spread of the gospel.

4. To which of the heavenly bodies does the psalmist refer to emphasize the majesty of God's creation? Verses 4 (last part), 5, 6.

NOTE.—In poetic terms David describes the motion of the sun as it appears to us. The intent of the figure is to portray the extent and completeness of the sun's motion throughout the day.

God's Glory Revealed in His Law

5. To what does the psalmist now turn as an even clearer revelation of God than that given by nature? Verse 7.

NOTE.—David has just recognized that "there is nothing hid from the heat" of the sun. "As he has felt the sun, perhaps in the desert, searching him out in every nook of shade where he attempted to hide from it, so he feels the Law searching out all the hiding-places of his soul." C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms,* page 64.

"Law" is the translation of the Hebrew *torah,* meaning "instruction." It includes the Ten Commandments, but is not restricted to the Ten Commandments, nor even to the Pentateuch, which are but parts of it. It "must be taken to include the whole of revelation—all that God has made known of His nature, character, and purpose, and of what He would have man be and do."—George Foot Moore, *Judaism,* vol. 1, p. 263.

6. How inclusive is the thought of verses 7-10?

NOTE.—

Name for the Law	*Nature of the Law*
law	perfect
testimony	sure
statutes	right
commandments	pure
fear	clean
judgments	true
	enduring
	righteous

Effects of the Law
converting
making wise
rejoicing
enlightening

Observe the different terms used to describe the varied aspects of divine revelation and compare Psalm 119. Verses 7-10 appear in essence throughout Psalm 119.

7. What does the law do for the soul? Verse 7.

NOTE.—"It was the privilege of the Jewish nation to represent the character of God as it had been revealed to Moses. . . . This was the fruit that God desired from His people. In the purity of their characters, in the holiness of their lives, in their mercy and loving-kindness and compassion, they

were to show that 'the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.' "—*Christ's Object Lessons,* pages 285, 286.

"In the life of Christ the principles of the law are made plain; and as the Holy Spirit of God touches the heart, as the light of Christ reveals to men their need of His cleansing blood and His justifying righteousness, the law is still an agent in bringing us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 308.

Childlike simplicity is the first step toward wisdom. See Matt. 11:25.

8. What can the statutes and commandments do for man's nature? Verse 8.

NOTE.—"Here is the only safeguard for individual integrity, for the purity of the home, the well-being of society, or the stability of the nation. Amidst all life's perplexities and dangers and conflicting claims the one safe and sure rule is to do what God says."—*Education,* page 229.

9. How long will the "fear" of the Lord endure? Verse 9, first part.

NOTE.—There is nothing transient or of short duration about the fear of the Lord. "It is the 'instruction of wisdom' (Prov. 15:33). The man who fears God will also respect and observe His precepts."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 19:9.

10. How are the judgments of the Lord described? Verse 9, last part.

NOTE.—"In mercy to the world, God blotted out its wicked inhabitants in Noah's time. In mercy He destroyed the corrupt dwellers in Sodom. Through the deceptive power of Satan the workers of iniquity obtain sympathy and admiration, and are thus constantly leading others to rebellion. It was so in Cain's and in Noah's day, and in the time of Abraham and Lot; it is so in our time. It is in mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace."—*The Great Controversy,* page 543.

11. What comparisons does David use to show the desirability of these judgments? Verse 10.

NOTE.—"Gold is regarded as an article of great value among men, but spiritual riches gained through following God's precepts are far superior to material wealth. . . .

"To the Hebrew it [honey] was a symbol of all that was pleasant to the palate. Even sweeter to the soul are God's commandments."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 19:10.

Application to Character and Conduct

12. What added blessing comes from keeping the law? Verse 11.

NOTE.—The psalmist does not seek to promote selfish observance of the law for the sake of reward, but rather offers reward as another of the manifold benefits of keeping the law.

"By constantly contemplating heavenly themes, our faith and love will grow stronger. Our prayers will be more and more acceptable to God, because they will be more and more mixed with faith and love. They will be more intelligent and fervent. There will be more constant confidence in Jesus, and you will have a daily, living experience in the willingness and power of Christ to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* vol. 3, p. 1145.

13. From what two kinds of sin does David pray to be kept? Verses 12, 13.

NOTE.—"Secret faults" are errors of which we may be unaware. "Presumptuous sins" are sins known to the sinner, actually committed in defiance of the Lord. Only by enlightenment derived from God's law and by His grace can the sinner become upright and innocent of sin.

14. With what prayer does the psalmist close the psalm? Verse 14.

NOTE.—The Hebrew word translated "strength" means "rock." God is both our "Rock," on whom we may build our character, and our "Redeemer," who delivers us from the power and guilt of sin. Compare Ps. 78:35; see also Deut. 32:4; Ps. 18:2; Isa. 41:14.

For Meditation

1. How may I learn to recognize more clearly the hand of God in nature?

2. How may the Sabbath direct my mind to God through nature?

3. Does my life prove to others that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul"?

4. Do I really enjoy the study of God's Word? If not, what is the hindering cause?

Lesson 3, for April 18, 1964

"The Lord Is My Light and My Salvation"

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 27.

MEMORY VERSE: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Psalm 27:1.

STUDY HELPS: "Education," pages 255, 256; "Steps to Christ," pages 121-126 (1908 ed., pp. 126-132; 1921 ed., pp. 123-128); "S.D.A. Bible Commentary," on Psalm 27.

AIM: To encourage the realization that complete confidence in God's power to save will banish all fear from the believer's heart.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey; learn the memory verse.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3.	☐
Monday: Questions 4, 5.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 6-8; begin reading study helps.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 9-11; read further from study helps.	☐
Thursday: Questions 12, 13; finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. Confidence in God

1. The remedy for fear. Ps. 27:1.
2. Confidence despite slander. V. 2.
3. Confidence in extreme danger. V. 3.
4. Confidence developed in the sanctuary. Vs. 4, 5.
5. The ultimate outcome of experiencing confidence. V. 6.

II. A Cry for Help

6. A recognition of need. V. 7.
7. Fellowship with God. V. 8.
8. Desire for continued fellowship. V. 9.
9. Assurance of God's care. V. 10.
10. Plea for God's guidance. V. 11.
11. Desire for complete victory. V. 12.

III. Relief in Absolute Trust

12. Sustained by confidence. V. 13.
13. Injunction to wait on the Lord. V. 14.

Introduction

Psalm 27 was composed by David when he was "a hunted fugitive, finding refuge in the rocks and caves of the wilderness." —*Education,* page 164. It is an expression of absolute confidence in the Lord when the psalmist was beset by manifold dangers. The message of the psalm is especially pertinent to us who live in an age when men's hearts are "failing them for fear." Luke 21:26.

Confidence in God

1. When confronted by fear, in whom may man put his confidence? Ps. 27:1. Compare John 1:7-9; 12:46; 1 John 1:5.

NOTE.—If God is our light, our salvation, our strength (literally, "stronghold"), we have no reason to fear men or devils. See Rom. 8:31; 1 John 4:18. Ps. 27:1 is a perfect example of Hebrew parallelism in which the thoughts are arranged in pairs, like a sound and its echo. This is the chief metrical characteristic of Hebrew poetry.

2. What experience came to the evil men and slanderers who attacked the psalmist? Ps. 27:2.

NOTE.—For "to eat up my flesh," the Revised Standard Version has "uttering slanders against me." Compare Ps. 22:13, 16, 21, where the psalmist compares his enemies to ravenous beasts.

3. Through what extreme dangers would the psalmist be able to maintain his composure and confidence? Verse 3.

NOTE.—It seems that David's confidence grows even stronger when his enemies are multiplied into an army and war is declared against him. Compare Ps. 3:6.

4. In what did David find the foundation for his confidence in God? Verses 4, 5.

NOTE.—"We now come to the roots of this bold faith. The psalmist had kept in closest communion with his God. He knew that God had made his courage strong, and he thus ardently voices his desire for the continuance of this communion as the one great goal of his life. But he also knows that such fellowship cannot be continued unless it is continually fed by prayer."—H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms,* page 236.

The one who lives in close fellowship with God is hidden "in His pavilion" till the danger is past, is shut away in a "secret" place where the enemy cannot find him, is set "upon a rock" above all danger—he has no reason to fear.

The word translated "beauty" may also be translated "graciousness," "kindness." In close communion with God the soul realizes how gracious He is.

5. What was the result of such close fellowship with God? Verse 6. Compare Ps. 16:11.

NOTE.—Appreciation of God's graciousness expresses itself in "sacrifices of joy" and "praises unto the Lord."

"The melody of praise is the atmosphere of heaven; and when heaven comes in touch with the earth, there is music and song—'thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.'" —*Education,* page 161.

A Cry for Help

6. When surrounded by dangers, what prayer did the psalmist utter? Ps. 27:7.

NOTE.—"At this point in the psalm there is a complete change in tone from implicit trust to a plaintive cry for help. . . . Even

when assured of God's favor, we need continually to recognize our need of Him and to request His aid."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 27:7.

7. In what intimate dialogue does the psalmist express the beauty of fellowship between himself and God? Verse 8.

NOTE.—"The preciousness of God's favor as shown in His face looking upon His children is one of the richest concepts in the Psalter."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 27:8.

8. What plea expresses David's continual desire, and upon what did he base his hope for continued blessings? Verse 9.

NOTE.—The Christian who has experienced God's saving grace may well address Him as "God of my salvation." As God has blessed him in the past, he may confidently expect the continuance of His mercy.

9. How great was the psalmist's assurance of God's care? Verse 10. Compare Isa. 49:14-16.

10. In what kind of pathway did David pray to be led? Ps. 27:11. Compare Ps. 25:4; 5:8.

NOTE.—God's way is "a level path" (R.S.V.) through the ups and downs of life.

11. What final petition did the psalmist make? Ps. 27:12.

Relief in Absolute Trust

12. How did the psalmist express his faith in the triumph of good? Verse 13.

NOTE.—"*I had fainted.* These words do not occur in the original. They are inserted to complete the evident meaning of the psalmist: 'What would have become of me, if I had not believed in the goodness of God!' So many and formidable are his enemies that he would collapse were it not for his sure belief that he will ultimately see a revelation of God's goodness on earth (see Job 19:25-27). This marks a sublimity of faith devoutly to be desired by every one of God's children. Faith could lapse into fear, if hope did not keep aflame."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 27:13.

13. With what exhortation does the psalmist encourage the reader to seek the Lord? Verse 14. Compare Ps. 25:5, 21.

NOTE.—The last two verses of this psalm are a sort of repetition of the first six verses and a reassurance of confidence.

"Work in faith, and leave results with God. Pray in faith, and the mystery of His providence will bring its answer. At times it may seem that you cannot succeed. But work and believe, putting into your efforts faith, hope, and courage. After doing what you can, wait for the Lord, declaring His faithfulness, and He will bring His word to pass. Wait, not in fretful anxiety, but in undaunted faith and unshaken trust."—*Testimonies,* vol. 7, p. 245.

For Meditation

1. What are the values of the fellowship of public worship?
2. What personal gains come from expressing appreciation of God's goodness?
3. What is the effect of fear on bodily and mental health? the effect of courage?

> "We should come with reverence to the study of the Bible, feeling that we are in the presence of God."—*Testimonies to Ministers,* page 107.

"Blessed Are the Pure in Heart"

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 24.

MEMORY VERSE: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart." Psalm 24:3, 4.

STUDY HELPS: 2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 15; "Patriarchs and Prophets," pages 707, 708; "The Desire of Ages," page 833; "Early Writings," pages 187-191; "Testimonies to Ministers," pages 426-443; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary," on Psalm 24.

AIM: To help us understand that only the pure in heart can enter into the presence of God.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1, 2; learn memory verse.	☐
Monday: Questions 3-6.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 7-9.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 10-12; begin reading study helps.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. The Sovereignty of God

1. Sovereign of the earth. Ps. 24:1.
2. God's right to sovereignty. V. 2.

II. Conditions of Coming Into God's Presence

3. The question. V. 3.
4. The fourfold answer. V. 4.
5. The source of man's righteousness. V. 5.
6. Man's part in finding righteousness. V. 6.

III. God's Entrance Into His Holy Place

7. The summons. V. 7.
8. The question in the response. V. 8, first part.
9. The answer. V. 8, second part.
10. The summons repeated. V. 9.
11. The question repeated. V. 10, first part.
12. The final answer. V. 10, second part.

THE LESSON

Introduction

Psalm 24 is generally considered "to have a historical background in the events of 2 Sam. 6 and 1 Chron. 15. David had captured the Jebusite stronghold of Zion (2 Sam. 5:6-10) and now determined to bring the ark from its temporary resting place in the house of Obed-edom at Kirjath-jearim to the tent that he had prepared for it in the city of Jerusalem. Accordingly, he arranged a ceremony for the occasion in which Ps. 24 was sung as part of the high ritual (see PP 707, 708). . . . The words

of vs. 7-10 of the psalm were sung by two choirs of angels when heaven welcomed the true Son of David back to the heavenly Jerusalem (see DA 833; EW 187, 190, 191)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Psalm 24.

The thought expressed in this psalm is reflected in the New Testament beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Matt. 5:8.

The Sovereignty of God

1. Whom does the psalmist set forth as possessing the world? Ps. 24:1. Compare Ps. 50:12.

NOTE.—There is an initial implication in this verse that ought to give us courage: "The Lord is rich in resources. He owns the world. Look to Him who has light, and power, and efficiency. He will bless everyone who is seeking to communicate light and love."—*Testimonies,* vol. 7, p. 212.

"Although Zion was His appointed dwelling, His presence and sovereignty extended throughout the world."—A. Cohen, *The Psalms* (Soncino edition), page 69.

"The verse is a perfect example of synonymous parallelism, the second half balancing, repeating, and enlarging the thought of the first half."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 24:1.

2. By what right does God lay claim to the earth and all that it contains? Ps. 24:2.

NOTE.—"God has laid His hand upon all things, both man and his possessions; for all belong to Him. He says, I am the owner of the world; the universe is Mine, and I require you to consecrate to My service the firstfruits of all that I, through My blessing, have caused to come into your hands. God's word declares, 'Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits.' 'Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.' This tribute He demands as a token of our loyalty to Him."—*Counsels on Stewardship,* page 72.

Conditions of Coming Into God's Presence

3. What penetrating question is asked with respect to coming into God's presence? Verse 3. Compare Psalm 15.

NOTE.—The question is equivalent to asking, "What is true religion? What kind of worship is acceptable in God's sight?" It should be borne in mind that the calamity of the death of Uzzah was fresh in the memory of David and the people of Israel. See 2 Samuel 6.

"God can accept no partial obedience, no lax way of treating His commandments. By the judgment upon Uzzah He designed to impress upon all Israel the importance of giving strict heed to His requirements. Thus the death of that one man, by leading the people to repentance, might prevent the necessity of inflicting judgments upon thousands."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 706.

4. What four qualifications must one have to come into God's presence? Ps. 24:4. Compare Isa. 33: 14, 15.

NOTE.—Ellen G. White wrote of the saints at the time of the second advent: "We all cried out: 'Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?' The angels ceased to sing, and there was a time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke: 'Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you.' "—*Testimonies,* vol. 1, p. 60.

"We are nearing the judgment, and those who bear the message of warning to the world must have clean hands and pure hearts. They must have a living connection with God. The thoughts must be pure and holy, the soul untainted, the body, soul, and spirit be a pure, clean offering to God, or He will not accept it."—*Testimonies to Ministers,* page 426.

5. What is the source of man's righteousness? Ps. 24:5. Compare Ps. 118:19, 20.

NOTE.—The psalmist is not content merely to give a catalog of virtues; he is careful to stress the fact that man's righteousness comes from the God of his salvation.

"Communion with God means man's transformation. The pilgrims who seek admittance to Zion must receive a righteousness which was not hitherto their own."—Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms and Their Meaning for Today,* page 109.

"We must have less faith in what we can do and more faith in what the Lord can do for us, if we will have clean hands and pure hearts."—*Testimonies,* vol. 7, p. 212.

6. What attitude on man's part is commended by the psalmist? Ps. 24:6. Compare Jer. 29:13; Matt. 6:33.

NOTE.—"That seek Thy face, O Jacob." In the Septuagint this clause is rendered "that seek the face of the God of Jacob." Like Jacob of old, who struggled all night with God and thus became a new creature, those who seek God earnestly with a whole heart will obtain the blessing of righteousness.

"Selah" is a word of uncertain meaning and doubtful significance, variously interpreted to indicate a pause, an instrumental interlude, a change of melody, emphasis, etc. Here, as in several other psalms, the word appears at the close of a section of thought. When reading the psalms aloud, omit this word.

God's Entrance Into His Holy Place

7. What summons does the procession bringing the ark to Jerusalem give as it approaches the gates of Zion? Ps. 24:7.

NOTE.—At the beginning of this ceremony, the bearers of the ark, which is the God-appointed symbol of His presence, are at the gates of Zion, and the procession is about to bring the ark into the city, which was to be its permanent residence.

"Lift up your heads." This appears to be a command for the top of the gates to be heightened, to permit the King of glory to pass through.

8. What question comes as a response to those who demanded the opening of the gates of Zion? Verse 8, first part.

NOTE.—The sentries at the gate are represented as challenging those who seek entrance to the city.

9. What answer is given by the procession? Verse 8, second part.

NOTE.—This answer accords with the ideas in verses 1 and 2, where God is represented as the sovereign Creator of the earth.

10. Again what summons does the procession give before the gates of Zion? Verse 9.

NOTE.—The summons and response are repeated for emphasis and added impressiveness.

11. What question is repeated by those in charge of the opening of the gates? Verse 10, first part.

12. What glorious response is given by the procession? Verse 10, second part. Compare 2 Samuel 6:2; 1 Kings 22:19.

NOTE.—"All heaven was waiting to welcome the Saviour to the celestial courts. As He ascended, He led the way, and the multitude of captives set free at His resurrection followed. The heavenly host, with shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song, attended the joyous train.

"As they drew near to the City of God, the challenge is given by the escorting angels,—

'Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.'

"Joyfully the waiting sentinels respond,—

'Who is this King of glory?' . . .

"The escorting angels make reply,—
'The Lord of hosts;
He is the King of glory.' Ps. 24:7-10.

"Then the portals of the City of God are opened wide, and the angelic throng sweep through the gates amid a burst of rapturous music."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 833.

For Meditation

1. What relation do reading, radio, TV, music, etc., have to "clean hands and a pure heart"?
2. Am I seeking "the kingdom of God and His righteousness" with a whole heart?

Lesson 5, for May 2, 1964

Salvation Out of Suffering

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 22.

MEMORY VERSE: "For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard." Ps. 22:24.

STUDY HELPS: "The Desire of Ages," pages 741-757; "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 221-230; "Steps to Christ," chapter "The Sinner's Need of Christ;" selected Messianic psalms: Psalms 2; 69; 72; 110.

AIM: To show how the Christian can triumph over suffering and despondency, and in faith render praise and thanksgiving to God.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey; learn memory verse.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-8.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 9-11; begin reading study helps.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 12, 13; read further from study helps.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. Contrast Between God and Man

1. Man's fear of abandonment. Ps. 22:1, 2; Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34.
2. God's care in the past. Ps. 22:3-5.
3. Man's desperate condition. Vs. 6-8; Matt. 27:39, 41-43.
4. Man's dependence on God. Ps. 22:9-11.

II. Man's Troubles of Body and Mind

5. External troubles. Vs. 12, 13.
6. Internal troubles. Vs. 14, 15.
7. Enemies. Vs. 16-18; Matt. 27:35; Luke 23:34; John 19:23, 24.
8. Prayer for deliverance. Ps. 22:19-21, first part.

III. Rejoicing in God's Goodness

9. Sudden deliverance. V. 21, second part.
10. The psalmist's personal rejoicing. Vs. 22-25.
11. The rejoicing of the meek. V. 26.
12. General rejoicing. Vs. 27-30.
13. Future rejoicing. V. 31.

Introduction

Psalm 22 has been accepted by generations of Christians as a prophetic and Messianic psalm and has sometimes been called "The Psalm of the Cross," because of references in it that the Gospel writers of the New Testament apply to the sufferings of Christ on the cross. Indeed, Christ identified Himself with the sufferer in the psalm by quoting the first half of verse 1 in His dying agony. As we study Psalm 22 it would be well to reread the story of Christ's last hours on the cross as told in Matthew 27:33-50; Mark 15:22-37; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:17-30.

"Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours He had relied upon the evidence of His Father's acceptance heretofore given Him. He was acquainted with the character of His Father; He understood His justice, His mercy, and His great love. By faith He rested in Him whom it had ever been His joy to obey. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, the sense of the loss of His Father's favor was withdrawn. By faith, Christ was victor."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 756.

Psalm 22 may be divided into three parts, the first depicting the contrast between God and man, the second describing man's troubles, and the third expressing thanksgiving after deliverance. The psalm is especially remarkable in structure in that there is no transition between the trouble of the first 21 verses and the relief of the rest of the psalm—the change comes in the middle of verse 21. Sometimes God's answer comes when we least expect His help.

Contrast Between God and Man

1. How forcefully does the psalmist express his suffering and fear of abandonment? On what occasion did Jesus utter this cry of despair? Ps. 22: 1, 2; Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34.

NOTE.—" 'My' seems to add a touch of loving faith to the apparent despair of the rest of the verse. Faith struggles with fear." —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 22:1.

Here is the cry of a child in desperation who cannot understand why his father, whom he has every reason to trust, has abandoned him. In His humanity, on the cross, Christ felt completely separated from His Father. "God heard every cry, but Christ had no evidence of answer."—*Ibid.,* on Ps. 22:2.

2. What perplexity does the psalmist express? Ps. 22:3-5.

NOTE.—"The sufferer is perplexed by the trial through which he passes. How can his God, who is holy and full of compassion, treat him in this fashion? . . . The sufferer seems to plead the argument that since God delivered the fathers who trusted Him, surely He will deliver him. When we are in darkness, seeing others rescued may make our lot appear more bitter."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 22:3, 4.

3. How desperate is the psalmist's condition? How do his enemies increase his despair? With what words did the priests, scribes, and elders taunt the humiliation of Christ on the cross? Verses 6-8; Matt. 27:39, 41-43.

NOTE.—So desperate was the psalmist's plight that he thought of himself as a worm of the dust and no man; he forgot entirely that he was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) and made "a little lower than the angels" (Ps. 8:5).

4. Despite his suffering, what hopeful realization dawns upon the psalmist's mind? Ps. 22:9-11.

NOTE.—His sense of hope, an instinct born with him, led him to recognize that his only help was in God. Since God had protected him from his birth, He surely could still be depended on. The psalmist turns the mockery of his enemies into an argument for deliverance.

Man's Troubles of Body and Mind

5. How does the psalmist describe the troubles brought upon him by fierce men? Verses 12, 13.

NOTE.—Bashan, a territory east of the river Jordan, was famous for its large, strong cattle. The psalmist compares his enemies to strong bulls, to wild beasts about to spring upon their prey, to a lion hungry for the kill.

6. How does he describe his anguish of soul? Verses 14, 15.

7. How does the psalmist further describe the depth of trouble into which he has fallen? To what fulfillment of verse 18 did New Testament writers point? Verses 16-18; Matt. 27:35; Luke 23:34; John 19: 23, 24.

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

8. In his deep anguish of body and soul, what does the psalmist do? Ps. 22:19-21, first part.

NOTE.—The prayer of verse 11 is offered with still deeper urgency. Note the phrase "be not Thou far from me," repeating with intensity the words "be not far from me" of verse 11, and echoing the phrase "why art Thou so far from me" of verse 1. The word "thou" in verse 19 is placed first in the Hebrew text for emphasis.

The Hebrew word translated "darling" means "only one," like an only daughter; in the parallel structure of verse 20 it is equivalent to "soul."

Rejoicing in God's Goodness

9. In response to his cry, what sudden change of feeling comes in the midst of the verse? Verse 21, second part.

NOTE.—"The psalmist's pleading ends with a feeling of complete relief. He knows that the Lord is near to help. This rapid change of feeling in the midst of the verse is typical of a large group of psalms (see Ps. 3; 6; 12; 28; etc.)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 22:21. It is as though a crushing weight had been suddenly lifted from off him.

"Although surrounded by 'dogs,' 'lions,' 'bulls,' 'wild oxen,' the sufferer knows that he is not forsaken. Despondency and gloom give way to trust, peace, and joyous praise. Verses 22-31 are a triumphant song of praise."—*Ibid.*

10. What spirit is now aroused in the psalmist? Verses 22-25.

NOTE.—"Again and again I have been instructed to say to our people: Let your faith and trust be in God. Do not depend on any erring man to define your duty. It is your privilege to say: 'I will declare Thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.' "—*Testimonies,* vol. 9, pp. 279, 280.

"Thy name" is equivalent to "Thy character" as Saviour.

11. Who especially will rejoice with the psalmist over his deliverance from trouble? Verse 26.

12. How general will be the rejoicing? Verses 27-30.

NOTE.—The picture is extended far beyond Israel to include all nations (compare Isa. 66:23; 60:3-10); gradually the horizon of the psalmist's outlook has been broadened until it now includes all the saved.

"In the latter part of the psalm—from the words 'Thou hast answered me' (v. 21) to the last word, 'He hath done it'—the heart lifts itself up on the wings of faith, and the prophet sees visions ever brighter and brighter opening before his gaze."—J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, 1864 ed., vol. 1, p. 106.

13. Who will continue to testify with the psalmist that God delivers His children from trouble? Verse 31. Compare Rom. 3:21-26.

NOTE.—"That He hath done this." That God protects His suffering children and delivers them from their enemies will be the theme transmitted from generation to generation.

For Meditation

1. When I am tempted to feel forsaken of God, can I still cling to Him in faith and call Him "my God"?
2. Can I recall experiences in which God did not answer my prayers in the affirmative, which I later recognized as best for me?
3. As God has interposed in behalf of His children in the past, may I expect Him to interpose in my behalf now?
4. Am I growing daily in my understanding of the atonement?

Lesson 6, for May 9, 1964

Forgiveness for the Repentant Sinner

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 51.

MEMORY VERSE: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. 51:10.

STUDY HELPS: 2 Samuel 11; 12:1-14; "Patriarchs and Prophets," chapter 71; "Steps to Christ," chapters, "Repentance," "Confession;" "Testimonies," vol. 5, pp. 635-641; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary," on Psalm 51.

AIM: To understand the nature of true repentance and God's power to forgive and restore the sinner.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey; learn memory verse.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-6.	☐
Monday: Questions 7-10.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 11-13; begin reading study helps.	☐
Wednesday: Question 14; read further from study helps.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. Prayer for Forgiveness

1. God's love the basis for forgiveness. Ps. 51:1.
2. The specific reality of sin. Vs. 1-3, 9.
3. All sin directed against God. V. 4.
4. The human propensity to evil. V. 5.
5. Complete cleansing. V. 7.
6. Joy in forgiveness. Vs. 8, 12, first part.

II. Prayer for Sanctification

7. Creation of a clean heart. V. 10.
8. In the presence of God. V. 11, first part.
9. The office of the Holy Spirit. V. 11, second part.
10. The necessity of a willing spirit. V. 12, second part.

III. The Forgiven Sinner's Promises

11. To instruct others in the way of righteousness. V. 13.
12. To praise God for His goodness. Vs. 14, 15.
13. To give the heart to God. Vs. 16, 17.

IV. Prayer for the Church

14. Extension of personal prayer to include others. Vs. 18, 19.

THE LESSON

Introduction

Psalm 51, perhaps the best known of the penitential psalms, "was composed by David 'after his great sin [with Bathsheba], in the anguish of remorse and self-abhorrence' (Ed 165). It is an expression of his 'repentance, when the message of reproof came to him from God,' intended 'to be sung in the public assemblies of his people, . . . that others might be instructed by the sad history of his fall' (PP 724, 725). It is a prayer for forgiveness and for sanctification through the Holy Spirit. Accompanying the petition are vows of gratitude for God's mercy and promises for the future." —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Psalm 51. Compare Psalms 6; 32; 38; 102; 130; 143.

Prayer for Forgiveness

1. What attributes of God did David recognize as ground for forgiveness? Ps. 51:1.

NOTE.—The Hebrew word *chesed,* translated "loving-kindness," when applied to God, describes His attitudes, relationships, and dealings with respect to man. "Mercy," "pity," and "kindness" are other appropriate translations, but no single word can cover the full breadth of God's benevolence comprehended in the word. The New Testament equivalent is "love," as used in 1 John 4:7, 8, etc.

2. For what does David seek forgiveness? Verses 1-3, 9.

NOTE.—"True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. . . . All confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty."—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 639.

In David's cry for forgiveness there is no suggestion of excuse, apology, or self-vindication. The truly penitent sinner blames no one but himself.

Sin is described under three names: "transgression," mutiny, rebellion, willing departure from God; "iniquity," moral distortion, a warping of the personality; "sin," completely missing the mark.

Forgiveness is described under three vivid words: "blot out," referring to the removal of the damaging record from God's book; "wash," a cleansing from sin, a figure drawn probably from the Eastern custom of scrubbing clothes; "cleanse," often used of ritual cleansing, as of from contact with disease.

"Throughly" is an archaic form of "thoroughly."

3. Against whom is all sin ultimately directed? Verse 4. Compare 2 Sam. 12:13; Gen. 39:9; 1 Cor. 8:12.

NOTE.—"All wrong done to others reaches back from the injured one to God." —*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 639.

4. In asking forgiveness, what inherited tendencies did David recognize? Ps. 51:5.

NOTE.—He "sought to stress the still greater need of God's mercy because of his inborn tendency to do evil."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 51:5.

5. For what purity did the psalmist plead? Verse 7.

NOTE.—David understood the spiritual meaning of the ceremonial law. "Do not listen to the enemy's suggestion to stay away from Christ until you have made yourself better. . . . If you wait until then, you will never come. When Satan points to your filthy garments, repeat the promise of Jesus, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' John 6:37. Tell the enemy that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Make the prayer of David your own, 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.' "—*Christ's Object Lessons,* pages 205, 206.

6. What evidence of God's forgiveness did David pray for? Verses 8, 12, first part.

NOTE.—David's supreme desire was to hear God's sweet voice of forgiveness. "Those who abide in Jesus will be happy, cheerful, and joyful in God."—*Testimonies,* vol. 4, p. 626.

Prayer for Sanctification

7. As a step beyond forgiveness, what did David pray for? Verse 10. Compare Ezek. 11:19; 36:26.

NOTE.—Through forgiveness God cleanses the heart; through sanctification He brings forth a new life. The sincerely penitent sinner always accompanies his prayer for forgiveness with a prayer for sanctification.

"David's prayer is for a spirit that is steadfast in its faith, and therefore constant in its obedience. The psalmist desires an entirely new mental and moral nature."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 51:10.

8. In whose presence did David pray that he might remain? Ps. 51:11, first part.

NOTE.—Lasting satisfaction is found only in the sense of God's presence. See Ps. 16:11; 30:7.

9. Which person of the Godhead is our guide in sanctification? Verse 11, second part. Compare Rom. 8:8, 9.

10. In what frame of mind did the psalmist pray to be kept? Ps. 51:12, second part.

NOTE.—" 'Free spirit' is better translated, 'willing spirit.' David prays to be kept in a frame of mind willing and ready to obey God and to serve Him."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 51:12.

The Forgiven Sinner's Promises

11. In the light of God's forgiveness and restoration, what resolution did David make? Verse 13.

NOTE.—It is the Christian's responsibility to instruct others concerning the sinfulness of sin, that, like David, they may turn from their sin and realize God's loving-kindness.

"When the grace of God reigns within, the soul will be surrounded with an atmosphere of faith and courage and Christlike love, an atmosphere invigorating to the spiritual life of all who inhale it."—*Testimonies,* vol. 6, p. 43.

12. What did the psalmist say would be a prominent result of forgiveness? Verses 14, 15. Compare Ps. 40:3.

NOTE.—"Forgiveness of sin and the relief of conscience unstop the lips of sinners and cause praise to flow forth abundantly."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 51:15.

"Bloodguiltiness" is probably a specific reference to David's murder of Uriah (see 2 Samuel 11:14-17).

13. What sacrifices are acceptable to God? Ps. 51:16, 17.

NOTE.—"The sacrifices of God" are those that He approves.

Prayer for the Church

14. Whom did David include in his closing prayer? Verses 18, 19.

NOTE.—It is characteristic of the psalmists to include others in their prayers. True religion is never selfish.

"*With burnt offering.* External forms of religion have their place. . . . We should take care that the most formal parts of public worship preserve the spirit of humble worship. There is nothing wrong in following certain forms of worship, but rather in a lack of sincere religion motivating the forms."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 51:19.

For Meditation

1. Am I prone to explain and excuse my sins on a basis of heredity, or environment?
2. What personal evidence of a new mental and moral nature do I have?
3. Do I see the significance and value of the forms of public worship and preserve a spirit of humble devotion during the service?

Lesson 7, for May 16, 1964

The Two Ways

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 1.

MEMORY VERSE: "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Psalm 1:6.

STUDY HELPS: "Steps to Christ," chapter "Consecration;" "Testimonies," vol. 4, pp. 526, 527, 587-591; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary," on Psalm 1.

AIM: To show that the happiness of this life and the blessedness in the life to come are the result of our complete consecration to God.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey; learn memory verse.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-9.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 10-13.	☐
Wednesday: Read from study helps.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. The Happiness of the Godly Man

1. The opening word. Ps. 1:1, first phrase.
2. Steps in evil to be avoided. V. 1, second, third, and fourth phrases.
3. The first secret of happiness. V. 2, first clause.
4. The second secret of happiness. V. 2, second clause.

II. The Effect of Blessedness

5. Likened to a tree. V. 3, first clause.
6. Careful nurture. V. 3, second clause.
7. The blessing of fruitfulness. V. 3, third clause.
8. The blessing of perennial vigor. V. 3, fourth clause.
9. The blessing of prosperity. V. 3, fifth clause.

III. The Unhappiness of the Ungodly Man

10. Likened to chaff. V. 4, first clause.
11. Lack of stability. V. 4, last clause.
12. The final results of ungodliness. V. 5.
13. History's universal lesson. V. 6.

THE LESSON

Introduction

This "Threshold Psalm," as it has been called, constitutes an instructional or didactic introduction to the book of Psalms. It is a brief and exquisitely constructed poem on the theme that in the end righteousness succeeds and unrighteousness fails.

"It is an OT sermon on the happiness of the man who lives a life wholly consecrated to God, and the utter destruction awaiting the man who leaves God out of his life" (*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Psalm 1), a topic very prominent in the book of Deuteronomy (Deut 30:15-20). The psalm consists of two stanzas set in sharp contrast, the first vividly likening the good man to a tree, stable, fruitful, and flourishing, and the second likening the evil man to the chaff, unstable and fruitless. Its message is "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Josh. 24:15. God never compels. He made us free moral agents, to choose "the way of the righteous."

The Happiness of the Godly Man

1. What is the meaning of the first word of this psalm? Ps. 1:1, first phrase.

NOTE.—The Hebrew words translated "Blessed is the man" might well be rendered "Oh, the happiness of the man!"

"Happiness comprehends material and spiritual blessings, both of which come as a result of following God's way. The word 'blessed,' used in the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-11), is a translation of the same word . . . that is used in the LXX to translate the 'blessed' of Ps. 1."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 1:1.

"The Hebrew word *ashrê,* usually rendered 'blessed' or 'happy,' probably derives from a root meaning 'to go forth,' 'to advance' and, in one of its forms, 'to lead the way.' The happiness of the Bible is not motionless but dynamic, and it has social implications. It goes somewhere, it has a purpose, and it opens a path to others."—Samuel Terrien, in *The Psalms and Their Meaning for Today,* page 240.

2. What three successive steps in a life of evil does the godly man avoid? Verse 1, second, third, and fourth phrases.

NOTE.—The psalmist first describes the way of the godly man in negative terms. by a process of self-control he says No to wrong. He wills to avoid contamination with evil. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." 1 Cor. 15:33. "Everything depends on the right action of the will."—*Steps to Christ,* page 47.

"Ungodly" suggests willful violation of

God's requirements; "sinners" are those who fall short of the goal of righteousness through ignorance or moral weakness; "scorners" are those who deliberately sin and find satisfaction in corrupting others.

3. Wherein does the godly man find his constant pleasure? Verse 2, first clause. Compare Jer. 15:16; Col. 3:16.

NOTE.—Whereas the godly man says No to wrong, he says Yes to righteousness. "He finds constant pleasure in reflecting on God's law. His study of God's Word is habitual and regular; it is not irksome. The psalmist's personal experience of delight is expressed in Ps. 119:16, 35, 47; etc."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 1:2. "We must *know* the law if we are to perceive its beauty and appreciate its worth, and the more we know of it, the greater shall be our joy in it. Many skim the Bible as a novel, when they should ponder it, and master it, line by line, like a grammar."—W. L. Watkinson, *The Preacher's Homiletical Commentary,* "The Psalms," vol. 1, p. 2.

The word "law" is translated from the Hebrew *torah,* which means instruction in general; it must not be restricted to the Ten Commandments. It comprehends God's will as revealed in His Word.

"The true Christian will never complain that the yoke of Christ is galling to the neck. He accounts the service of Jesus as the truest freedom. The law of God is his delight."—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 220.

4. On what does the godly man meditate? Ps. 1:2, second clause. Compare Ps. 119:15, 97, 148; Deut. 6:6-9; Josh. 1:8; Phil. 4:8.

NOTE.—Moffatt translates this clause, "poring over it day and night." (The Bible: A New Translation by James Moffatt. Copyright by James Moffatt, 1954. Used by permission of Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc.) Russell A. Peterson's translation in Basic English reads: "He dwells in it both day and night." Preoccupying the mind with good is one of the God-given means of meeting and resisting temptation.

"My brethren and sisters, old and young, when you have an hour of leisure, open the Bible and store the mind with its precious truths. When engaged in labor, guard the mind, keep it stayed upon God, talk less, and meditate more."—*Testimonies,* vol. 4, p. 588.

The Effect of Blessedness

5. To what is the life of the godly man likened? Ps. 1:3, first clause. Compare Jer. 17:8.

NOTE.—"Their work being always urgent, it is difficult for some to secure time for meditation and prayer; but this they should not fail to do. The blessing of heaven, obtained by daily supplication, . . . will cause them to increase in moral and spiritual strength, like a tree planted by the river of waters, whose leaf will be always green and whose fruit will appear in due time."—*Testimonies,* vol. 4, p. 539.

6. How carefully is the godly man nurtured? Ps. 1:3, second clause.

NOTE.—The tree used here by way of illustration is set in a place favorable for cultivation, where clear, flowing streams supply an abundance of water. See Ezek. 31:3, 4.

"As the tree is rooted in the solid earth and draws its moisture from the ever-flowing stream, so the godly man sends his roots and derives sustenance from the water springs of salvation. He is steadfast, fixed, anchored. Thus, though he may be assailed by trouble and temptation, he stands firm; and the greater the trial, the deeper the root, and the stronger his hold on God."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 1:3.

"The soul 'rooted' in Christ (Col. 2:7) is as the pine, sending down so strong a *taproot* that the avalanche may break the trunk, but cannot uproot it."—*The Pulpit Commentary,* 1950 ed., vol. 8, p. 3.

7. What is the first blessing resulting from the godly man's devotion to God's Word? Verse 3, third clause. Compare Gal. 5:22, 23; Heb. 12:11.

NOTE.—"We are as trees planted in the garden of the Lord; and He comes to us seeking the fruit He has a right to expect." —*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 423.

8. What is the second blessing? Ps. 1:3, fourth clause. Compare Ps. 92: 12, 13.

NOTE.—Compare Isaiah's contrary observation regarding the wicked: "Ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water." Isa. 1:30.

9. What is the third and ultimate blessing? Ps. 1:3, fifth clause.

NOTE.—"Regardless of the success or failure of the undertaking, his trust in God empowers him to draw life from the eternal Source and ultimately to reach his goal."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 1:3.

"Sickness, accident, hard times, losses through the failure or dishonesty of others, may befall the child of God as well as the child of the world; but the *natural tendency* of thorough integrity, of the diligence of one who does everything with his might as unto the Lord, and of the wisdom, courage, and good temper which are among the fruits of the Spirit, and the guidance of God's providence in answer to prayer, is to bring prosperity (Ps. 37:4-7; Phil. 4:4-7)." —*The Pulpit Commentary,* vol. 8, p. 4.

The Unhappiness of the Ungodly Man

10. To what is the ungodly man's life likened? Verse 4, first clause. Compare Job 21:18; Isa. 17:13.

NOTE.—"In the figure of the chaff, the psalmist shows the result of a life of wickedness."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 1:4.

11. What happened to the chaff of the psalmist's figure? Ps. 1:4, last clause.

NOTE.—"In contrast to a tree, the chaff has no root, no fixed place. Dead, dry, helpless, it is at the mercy of the elements. The ungodly are attached to nothing; they lack stability and cannot endure. In Palestine grain was threshed on a flat, exposed piece of ground, often on a wind-swept hill. The precious kernel remained while the chaff was carried away. Had the psalmist lived in certain other parts of the world, he might have employed the figure of the tumbleweed. . . .

"There is a paradox in the use of the two figures of speech. Outwardly, the tree appears to be held prisoner; in reality, it is free, grows, and bears fruit. Outwardly, the chaff appears to be free; in reality, it is a slave to environment. The Christian, attached to God, his source of life and strength, grows and produces fruit; the chaff, unattached, cut off from its source of strength, produces nothing. It has a freedom not worth possessing. Compare Jesus' figure of the two houses (Matt. 7:24-27)." —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 1:4.

12. What is the ultimate end of ungodliness? Verse 5.

NOTE.—In this life there must be a separation of the righteous from the wicked; but "this will be especially true in the last judgment when the wicked are separated from the righteous at the end of their respective ways (see Matt. 25:31-46)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 1:5.

13. With what universal lesson does the psalmist conclude his instruction? Verse 6.

NOTE.—This is the final reason for the opposite endings of the two ways open to every man: "Since God knows, He discriminates, and He approves or condemns according to the eternal standards."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 1:6.

For Meditation

1. Do I rightly estimate the value of positive thinking in my own experience? Am I learning to preoccupy the mind with good?

2. Do I really take delight in dwelling on the things of God? Do I find my chief pleasure in God's way?

A Song of Utter Faith

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 46.

MEMORY VERSE: "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." Psalm 46:7.

STUDY HELPS: "The Desire of Ages," chapter 38, pages 359-362; "Education," pages 260, 261; "The Ministry of Healing," pages 51-58; "Steps to Christ," chapter "Faith and Acceptance;" "Prophets and Kings," pages 201-203; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary," on Psalm 46.

AIM: To increase our faith in God's care by deepening our realization that God actually dwells with His believing child.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3; learn memory verse.	☐
Monday: Questions 4-8.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 9, 10; begin reading study helps.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 11-13; read further from study helps.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. Faith in the Lord of Creation

1. Our refuge. Ps. 46:1, first part.
2. Our help. V. 1, second part.
3. Our trust. Vs. 2, 3.

II. Faith in the Lord of Human History

4. Our source of happiness. V. 4.
5. Our stability. V. 5, first and second parts.
6. Our immediate help. V. 5, last part.
7. Our deliverance. V. 6.
8. Our "Immanuel." V. 7.

III. Faith in the Lord of Eternal Peace

9. Our champion. V. 8.
10. Our peace. V. 9.
11. Our satisfaction. V. 10, first part.
12. Our Lord's exaltation. V. 10 last part.
13. Our "Immanuel." V. 11.

THE LESSON

Introduction

Psalm 46 has been called "The Song of Songs of Faith." The psalm is a glorious hymn on the theme, so appropriate for us who live in the last days, that in the midst of earth's calamities and distress God's children are secure, for God is with us. As such it "will bring special comfort to the people of God in the time of trouble (see GC 639). In that fearful hour, when a mighty earthquake such as never was will convulse the earth; when the sun, moon, and stars will be shaken out of their courses; when the mountains will shake like a reed, and ragged rocks be scattered on every side; when the sea will be lashed into fury and the whole surface of the earth be broken up; when mountain chains will sink and islands disappear (Matt. 24:29, 30; Luke

21:25, 26; GC 637; EW 34, 41), the saints will find protection in God."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, on Ps. 46:11.

The psalm has three stanzas practically equal in length, with refrain and Selah appropriately placed, depicting three scenes of commotion and encouraging the child of God to exercise faith in the ever-present Lord of hosts. A celebrated victory in the days of Jehoshaphat made it possible for the Israelites to sing Psalm 46 with understanding. *Prophets and Kings,* pages 201-203.

Faith in the Lord of Creation

1. Upon what basic truth does the psalmist's faith rest? Ps. 46:1, first part.

NOTE.—"The order of the words in the Hebrew places emphasis on the word 'God' —He, nothing else, is our refuge in the face of calamities of every sort. The statement really reads thus: 'God is for us refuge and strength,' the important thought being that God is on our side."—H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms,* page 363.

2. What has God proved to be in the face of calamity? Verse 1, second part.

NOTE.—"If we encounter difficulties, and in Christ's strength overcome them; if we meet enemies, and in Christ's strength put them to flight; if we accept responsibilities, and in Christ's strength discharge them faithfully, we are gaining a precious experience. We learn, as we could not otherwise have learned, that our Saviour is a present help in every time of need."—*Testimonies,* vol. 5, p. 34.

3. In view of God's reliability, what should be our attitude in times of extreme physical danger? Verses 2, 3.

NOTE.—"The convulsions of nature, the earthquake that throws the mountains into the sea, the roaring of the waves, the cataclysm of the tidal wave—these phenomena as well as any commotions and revolutions in the political world need not shake the one who trusts in God. Whatever may happen, God is a proved refuge."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, on Ps. 46:2.

Selah. The word here marks the close of the first stanza; it appears again at the close of the second and third stanzas (verses 7, 11).

Faith in the Lord of Human History

4. In what figure does the psalmist describe the happiness of the faithful? Verse 4. Compare Ezek. 47:1-5; Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:8; Rev. 22:1.

NOTE.—"Our spiritual life must be daily revived by the stream that makes glad the city of our God."—*Testimonies,* vol. 8, p. 27.

5. What is the reason for the stability of the faithful? Ps. 46:5, first and second parts. Compare Isa. 12:6; Ps. 16:8.

6. When does God give help to His trusting children? Ps. 46:5, last part. Compare Lam. 3:22, 23; Ps. 3:1-6.

NOTE.—The Hebrew words translated "right early" read literally "at the turning of the morning."

The Christian's first thought on waking should be that God sustains, even as his last thought on going to sleep at night should be one of complete confidence. This is working faith.

7. How has God manifested His power in the tumult of nations? Ps. 46:6.

NOTE.—"The heathen" means "the nations." "The very earth seemed to melt or dissolve before Him. Everything became

still. The danger passed away at His command, and the raging world became calm. The Bible abounds in language of this kind, showing the absolute power of God, or His power to control all the raging elements on land and ocean by a word."—Albert Barnes, *Notes, Critical, Explanatory, and Practical, on the Book of Psalms,* vol. 2, p. 43. Compare the experience of the disciples on the stormy Sea of Galilee. Matt. 14:22-33.

8. What reason is again given for God's people remaining unmoved? Verse 7. Compare Ps. 23:4.

NOTE.—"The Lord of Hosts." "The name first occurs in the mouth of Hannah, 1 Sam. 1:11, and is applied to God as the Great King whom all created powers, the armies both in heaven and in earth, obey. To this name the psalmist immediately subjoins another, 'the God of Jacob,' the covenant God of His people. Thus we are reminded . . . of the double prop on which our faith rests: the infinite power whereby He can subdue the universe unto Himself, and the fatherly love which He has revealed in His Word. Where these two are joined together, our faith may trample on all enemies."—J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms,* 1864 ed., vol. 1, p. 227.

The idea "The Lord of hosts is with us" is epitomized in the name Immanuel, "God with us" (Isa. 7:14; 8:8, 10).

This verse, sounding the keynote of the psalm, is the refrain to the second and third stanzas. See verse 11. It would not seem inappropriate to insert it also at the close of the first stanza, after verse 3.

"Comforted by this verse, John Wesley courageously met the approach of death. He quoted it the night before his decease, and was heard repeating its promise all through the night hours.

"Our strength lies not in self, nor in alliance with worldly power, but in God. Calvin said: 'That the faithful might learn that, without any aid from the world, the grace of God alone was sufficient for them. . . . Therefore, though the help of God may but trickle to us in slender streams, we should enjoy a deeper tranquillity than if all the power of the the world were heaped up all at once for our help."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 46:7.

Faith in the Lord of Eternal Peace

9. What testimony to God's power does the psalmist bear? Ps. 46:8.

10. What else is accomplished by God's power? Verse 9.

NOTE.—Here is a picture of complete victory. The field of battle is strewn with broken weapons and burned vehicles.

11. What advice does God give to those who are in the midst of tumult and castrophe? Verse 10, first part. Compare 2 Chron. 20:17.

NOTE.—"The first clause of this verse has been paraphrased: 'Hush! Cease your tumult and realize that I am God.' We talk too much and listen too little. We lack Christian poise and steadiness, because of our ceaseless busyness. Moses spent forty years in the land of Midian (Acts 7:29, 30), Paul three years in the desert (Gal. 1:17; 18; AA 125-128), and Jesus forty days in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1, 2), in preparation for the responsibilities of the divine call." —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 46:10.

"When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' Ps. 46:10. Here alone can true rest be found. And this is the effectual preparation for all who labor for God. Amid the hurrying throng, and the strain of life's intense activities, the soul that is thus refreshed will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. The life will breathe out fragrance, and will reveal a divine power that will reach men's hearts."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 363.

12. What else will be known by those who heed the advice to "be still"? Ps. 46:10, last part.

13. With what emphatic reassertion does the psalmist close this psalm of faith? Verse 11.

NOTE.—The idea that God is with us—"Immanuel"—is very precious. However, "the church militant should not play with the illusion of having 'God in the midst of her.' *Immanuel* is a motto of condemnation as well as of confidence. The psalmist waited for the day of the Lord. So also shall the Christian wait."—Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms and Their Meaning for Today*, page 76.

For Meditation

1. What can the realization of the meaning of "Immanuel" do for me in the common affairs of daily living?
2. How can I learn to hear God's voice above the noise and confusion of the 1960's?
3. What is the basis of a faith that delivers?

Lesson 9, for May 30, 1964

The Law of God

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119.

MEMORY VERSE: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." Psalm 119:1.

STUDY HELPS: "Steps to Christ," chapters, "The Test of Discipleship," "A Knowledge of God;" "Education," pages 123-127; "Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students," pages 421-430; "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 287-290.

AIM: To awaken within us a fresh appreciation of the Word of God and the blessings that attend those who study and obey it.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey; learn memory verse.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3.	☐
Monday: Questions 4-6.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 7-9; begin reading study helps.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 10-12.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. God's Revelation to Man

1. The theme of the psalm. Ps. 119:1.
2. Man's state without God's revelation. V. 176.
3. Steps in Bible study. Vs. 30-32.

II. Characteristics of God's Revelation

4. Some attributes of God's Word. Vs. 39, 86, 96, 138, 140, 160.
5. The worth of God's Word. V. 103.
6. The eternity of the Word. Vs. 89, 142, 152, 160.

III. Our Relationship to God's Revelation

7. Our attitude toward the Bible. Vs. 14, 16, 24, 35, 47.
8. Our devotion to Bible study. Vs. 10, 34, 69.
9. Our constancy in Bible study. Vs. 55, 97, 147, 148.

IV. Results of a Knowledge of God's Revelation

10. The results of study and obedience. Vs. 9, 11, 130.
11. Liberty in obedience. V. 45.
12. Communicating God's Word. Vs. 13, 27, 42, 46, 164, 171.

THE LESSON

Introduction

Psalm 119 is a lengthy meditation on the law of God. The Hebrew word commonly translated "law" is *torah,* which means basically "instruction" or "precept" and in general signifies the written revelation of God's will. While including the Ten Commandments in its scope, the application of Psalm 119 should by no means be restricted to the Decalogue. It may be considered to concern the whole of God's revealed Word —the Bible.

In the Hebrew, this psalm is in the form of an acrostic or alphabetic poem, consisting of twenty-two sections of eight verses each, marked by the regular succession of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the King James Version only a part of the acrostic form shows. In the Hebrew, each verse in the first section begins with *aleph,* the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; each verse in the second section begins with *beth,* the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet; and so on. If this feature were represented in English, all eight verses of the first section would begin with the letter A; all eight verses of the second section would begin with B; and so on. For the Hebrews, the psalm probably served as a sort of ABC book, making it easy to memorize and recall the truths contained in it.

Each of the 176 verses of the psalm (except verse 122), contains a word or words denoting God's revelation, His instruction, His law for His children; but monotony is avoided by the use of a variety of synonyms: law, testimonies, commandments, precepts, statutes, judgments, word, etc.

God's Revelation to Man

1. What is the theme of Psalm 119? Ps. 119:1.

NOTE.—The psalm begins—like Psalm 1—by pronouncing a blessing upon those who obey the instruction found in God's Word. This verse is really the text upon which the rest of the psalm is built. It summarizes the teaching of the psalm.

2. Recognizing his straying condition, on what does the psalmist base his plea for help? Verse 176. Compare Isa. 53:6; Matt. 18:12-14.

NOTE.—"When a sheep strays from the fold it seldom finds its way back without help. Like all the rest of us, the psalmist had wandered into forbidden paths, but the Lord sought him and brought him home again. . . . The good shepherd does not return from his search empty-handed. The way may be long and arduous, the path rough and thorny, but the shepherd perseveres and does not give up until he finds his lost sheep (Matt. 18:12-14; Luke 15: 4-7)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 119:176.

"The souls in China are no more precious than the souls within the shadow of our doors."—*Christian Service,* page 199.

3. What three successive steps should the Christian take as a result of studying God's revelation? Ps. 119: 30-32.

NOTE.—Choosing the right way, determining to continue steadfast in that way, moving actively toward the kingdom—these steps may be taken by everyone who opens God's Word with a sincere desire to obey. They are the opposite of the successive steps in a life of evil described in Ps. 1:1.

Characteristics of God's Revelation

4. What are some of the chief characteristics of God's revelation? Verses 39, 86, 96, 138, 140, 160. Compare Ps. 19:7-10.

NOTE.—What a galaxy of descriptive words the psalmist marshals to delineate the worth of God's Word: good, faithful, broad, right, righteous, pure, true.

God's Word is exceedingly broad; while all other things are bounded by a narrow compass, His Word has no limits. It is a transcript of His character. Its truths will challenge our comprehension throughout eternity.

5. How does the psalmist express the worth of God's Word? Ps. 119: 103. Compare vs. 72, 127.

NOTE.—"The psalmist's words, 'The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver' (Psalm 119:72), state that which is true from other than a religious point of view. . . . Even in this age of passion for money getting, when competition is so sharp and methods are so unscrupulous, it is still widely acknowledged that, for a young man starting in life, integrity, diligence, temperance, purity, and thrift constitute a better capital than any amount of mere money."—*Education,* page 137.

6. How long will the principles of God's Word last? Verses 89, 142, 152, 160. Compare Matt. 24:35.

NOTE.—"Those principles that were made known to man in Paradise as the great law of life will exist unchanged in Paradise restored. When Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's law of love will be obeyed by all beneath the sun."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing,* pages 50, 51.

Our Relationship to God's Revelation

7. What was the psalmist's attitude toward God's revelation? Ps. 119:14, 16, 24, 35, 47. Compare Ps. 1:2, first part.

NOTE.—"Delight naturally follows meditation, being the outcome or fruit of it. The law ceases to be a burden and becomes the source of greatest joy and delight. Those who live in harmony with heaven thrill with pleasure as the sacred pages of the Word of God are read."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 119:16.

8. How complete was the psalmist's devotion and dedication to the study of what God had revealed? Ps. 119: 10, 34, 69.

NOTE.—"There must not be a divided heart in the Lord's service (see Deut. 6:5; Matt. 6:24; 12:30; Luke 16:13)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 119:2.

9. How constantly did the psalmist direct his attention to God's revelation? Verses 55, 97, 147, 148. Compare Deut. 6:6-9; Ps. 1:2, second part.

NOTE.—In verses 147, 148 the word "prevent" means "precede." Before daybreak the

psalmist could be found studying, and during wakeful seasons of the night he meditated upon God's Word.

Results of a Knowledge of God's Revelation

10. What are some of the results of studying and obeying God's Word? Ps. 119:9, 11, 130.

NOTE.—Cleansing from sin, power to keep from sinning, wisdom, understanding, peace—these are some of the gifts with which God honors those who study and obey His Word.

"The mind must constantly feed upon the Word, else the defenses of soul will break down, and Satan will gain the advantage. A neglect to study and to meditate upon the Word for even one day results in serious loss."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 119:9.

11. What kind of life does the one enjoy who seeks to walk in the way of God's commandments? Verse 45. Compare James 1:25; 2:12.

NOTE.—"The motto, 'Obedience to law is liberty,' is frequently seen on courtroom walls, and is a worthy motto for every Christian to remember. When, by the grace of God, a man accepts the Saviour's yoke (Matt. 11:28-30), he sees the law as being clearly in accord with his highest interests and conducive to his highest happiness. . . . He then looks upon the will of God as liberty, and upon sin as bondage. . . . When we acknowledge the defects of character it [the law] points out to us, and turn to Christ to remedy them, we find that the law has pointed the way to true liberty, for the highest liberty is freedom from sin." —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on James 1:25.

"Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one's self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is 'the law of liberty.' James 2:12."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 466.

"The youth have an inborn love of liberty; they desire freedom; and they need to understand that these inestimable blessings are to be enjoyed only in obedience to the law of God. This law is the preserver of true freedom and liberty. It points out and prohibits those things that degrade and enslave, and thus to the obedient it affords protection from the power of evil."—*Education,* page 291.

"If the OT idea of instruction is applied to 'law' throughout the Bible, it takes away from 'law' the sense of blind compulsion and turns the commandments of God into guideposts on the road of life, warning against dangerous detours into paths of sin."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Prov. 3:1.

12. As a result of a knowledge of God's instruction, what was found on the psalmist's lips? Ps. 119:13, 27, 42, 46, 164, 171.

NOTE.—"Every faithful disciple will tell others of his great joy in the Word of God and will invite them to share in this blessed experience."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 119:13.

For Meditation

1. What does it mean to hide God's Word in one's heart? What will be the result of such a habit?
2. How does subjection to God's will restore man's true glory and dignity?
3. If I do not find delight in Bible study, what is wrong? Rom. 8:7. How may I remedy the situation? Verses 13, 14.

> "The Sabbath school should be one of the greatest instrumentalities, and the most effectual, in bringing souls to Christ."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 10.

Man's Brevity, God's Eternity

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 90.

MEMORY VERSE: "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it." Psalm 90:17.

STUDY HELPS: "The Desire of Ages," pages 72-74; "Steps to Christ," chapter "The Work and the Life;" "S.D.A. Bible Commentary," on Psalm 90.

AIM: To realize that satisfaction and joy in our daily life must come from our conception of the right relation between man in his changeableness and the eternal God.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey; learn memory verse.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-8.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 9-13.	☐
Wednesday: Begin reading study helps.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. God, Man's Dwelling Place

1. Man's continual refuge. Ps. 90:1.
2. God's eternal existence. V. 2.
3. God's timelessness. Vs. 3, 4.
4. Man's transitory nature. Vs. 5, 6.

II. Sin—The Reason for Man's Changeableness

5. God's displeasure. Vs. 7, 11.
6. God's all-seeing eye. V. 8.
7. Man's short life. Vs. 9, 10.
8. Meditation on life's brevity. V. 12.

III. Prayer for Redemption

9. For renewal of God's compassion. V. 13.
10. For gladness in God's mercy. Vs. 14, 15.
11. For recognition of God's providences. V. 16.
12. For a reflection of the beauty of God's character. V. 17, first clause.
13. For God's blessing upon man's work. V. 17, second and third clauses.

THE LESSON

Introduction

We are continually confronted with a realization of human frailty and the expectation of death. The swift passing of our earthly days would make life meaningless and empty if it were not for the fact that our Creator is eternal and we find our dwelling place in Him. Psalm 90 is perhaps the most sublime poem ever written on the brevity and vanity of human existence in the light of the psalmist's deep confidence in God's eternal watchcare. "Ruggedness of style, 'the stamp of high antiquity,' vastness of theme, frequent identity with the language of Deuteronomy—these elements

help to support the view that Moses was the author of Psalm 90."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Psalm 90.

God, Man's Dwelling Place

1. What has God been to His people throughout the generations of human history? Ps. 90:1. Compare Ps. 91:9.

NOTE.—The expression "dwelling place" combines the ideas of home and refuge; it is both a quiet abiding place and a refuge from danger. The Christian not only looks forward to a city that hath foundations (Heb. 11:10); he has the assurance that God is *now* his home.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!
—*Isaac Watts.*

2. How does the psalmist describe the eternity of God? Ps. 90:2.

NOTE.—Perhaps in all the Bible there is no more sublime expression of the eternity of God. As the "Ancient of Days" (Dan. 7:9), He *was* before time began and *will be* after time shall cease. "The man who recognizes the eternity of God and regards his own life as related to the Eternal, has a powerful stimulus to dignified, worthy living."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 90:2.

3. How is God's timelessness illustrated? Verses 3, 4.

4. In what succession of figures does the psalmist describe man's transitory nature? Verses 5, 6.

NOTE.—"In the East, one night's rain works a change as if by magic. The field at evening was brown, parched, arid as a desert; in the morning it is green with the blades of grass. The scorching hot wind (James 1:11) blows upon it, and again before evening it is withered."—J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms,* 1868 ed., vol. 2, p. 141.

Sin—The Reason for Man's Changeableness

5. How is God's attitude toward sin represented? Verses 7, 11.

NOTE.—"The shortness of human life and the troubles which fill it are the effect of sin which kindles God's anger, as proved by the experience of the people of Israel."—A. Cohen, *The Psalms* (Soncino edition), page 298.

6. What has been set in the light of God's countenance? Verse 8.

NOTE.—"*Secret sins.* The sins of the heart, which we have tried to hide from the eyes of men; or perhaps the sin that we have forgotten."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 90:8.

7. How does the psalmist further illustrate man's short life? Verses 9, 10.

8. With what brief meditation does the psalmist close his consideration of God's eternity and man's transitoriness? Verse 12.

NOTE.—"This aspect of the subject is brought to a very practical conclusion by reducing the issue to a brief prayer to the effect that God may help us so to take note of the brevity of human life and of the few days that are ours that we may consider what the deep causes are and so get a 'wise heart.' According to this statement

> "If you fail ninety-nine times in a hundred, but succeed in saving the one soul from ruin, you have done a noble deed for the Master's cause." —*Testimonies,* vol. 4, p. 132.

wisdom seems to consist in a full awareness of what is wrong with mankind and a full retreat to God as the only dwelling in this stormy existence where man can be safe."—H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms,* page 647.

Prayer for Redemption

9. How does the psalmist begin his final prayer? Verse 13.

NOTE.—"God's repentance is not like man's repentance. 'The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent.' Man's repentance implies a change of mind. God's repentance implies a change of circumstances and relations. Man may change his relation to God by complying with the conditions upon which he may be brought into the divine favor, or he may, by his own action, place himself outside the favoring condition; but the Lord is the same 'yesterday, and today, and forever.' Hebrews 13: 8. Saul's disobedience changed his relation to God; but the conditions of acceptance with God were unaltered—God's requirements were still the same, for with Him there 'is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' "—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 630.

10. For what evidence of God's love does he plead? Verses 14, 15.

NOTE.—To experience God's mercy, His loving-kindness, is reason for rejoicing. "The psalmist prays that after a night of sorrow and suffering, God will give a morning of joy and peace."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 90:14.

"That new happiness, which consists in the certainty of being loved by God, is also thought of as the only factor that can outweigh or counterbalance the days of affliction or the years wherein evil has been the order of the day."—H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms,* page 648.

11. For what spiritual insight does the psalmist pray? Verse 16.

NOTE.—The Christian needs to be conditioned from childhood to becoming aware of God's continuous, uninterrupted acts of mercy, or His providential acts, in His dealings with His people as individuals as well as a church. With David he should cry out with rejoicing, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Ps. 23:6.

12. For what experience does the psalmist pray? Verse 17, first clause.

NOTE.—Here begins the glorious climax of the psalm.

The word translated "beauty" means "kindness," "favor;" it is apparently a synonym for "steadfast love." "When we see the loveliness of the character of God, we are 'transfigured by His grace' (see Ed 80; MB 95), and 'the beauty of the Lord our God' is 'upon us.' "—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 90:17.

"The last lingering traces of the curse of sin will be removed, and Christ's faithful ones will appear in 'the beauty of the Lord our God,' in mind and soul and body reflecting the perfect image of their Lord."—*The Great Controversy,* page 645.

13. With what practical desire does the prayer close? Verse 17, second and third clauses.

NOTE.—"The work of our hands" means simply our everyday tasks. The professional and vocational duties by which we

earn our livelihood, the common, ordinary tasks of the home, the farm, the shop, humdrum though they may seem, should be performed with a sincerity, devotion, and perfection that will merit God's approval. Let us not belittle life's commonplaces. Though life is transitory, whatever our hands find to do we should do with our might. Eccl. 9:10. God's plan allows for nothing cheap or shoddy in the Christian's work.

For Meditation

1. Am I increasingly aware of God's providences in my daily activities?
2. What can the realization that "Thou God seest me" do for my Christian experience?
3. Are my ordinary daily tasks and my professional or vocational duties performed so carefully that I may ask God's seal of approval upon them?

Lesson 11, for June 13, 1964

From Doubt to Triumphant Faith

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 73.

MEMORY VERSE: "But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all Thy works." Ps. 73:28.

STUDY HELPS: "Steps to Christ," chapter, "What to Do With Doubt;" "Testimonies," vol. 1, pp. 408, 409; vol. 5, pp. 547-549; vol. 6, pp. 367, 368; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary," on Psalm 73; selected psalms on the problem: Psalms 37; 49; 94.

AIM: To help us understand that, although the wicked appear to prosper and the righteous are persecuted, those who serve God will ultimately find satisfaction in the presence of God.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1, 2; learn memory verse.	☐
Monday: Questions 3-6.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 7-9; begin reading study helps.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 10-14; read further from study helps.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. An Introductory Statement

1. The surety of God's goodness. Ps. 73:1.
2. The psalmist's previous doubt. V. 2.

II. The Apparent Prosperity of the Wicked

3. The reason for doubt. V. 3.
4. Description of the prosperity of the wicked. Vs. 4-9.
5. Influence of the wicked on others. Vs. 10, 11.
6. The psalmist's honest reflection. Vs. 12-14.

III. The Solution of the Problem

7. The place of the solution. Vs. 15-17.

8. The real outcome of the wicked. Vs. 18-20.
9. The reason for the psalmist's doubt. Vs. 21, 22.
10. The psalmist's recognition of God's presence. Vs. 23, 24, first part.
11. The ultimate solution and realization. Vs. 24 (second part), 25, 26.

IV. The Conclusion

12. The ultimate end of the wicked. V. 27.
13. The psalmist's personal conclusion. V. 28, first part.
14. The psalmist's resolution. V. 28, second part.

THE LESSON

Introduction

Psalm 73 undertakes to solve a problem that perplexes every one of us who observes that apparently in this life bad men prosper and good men are persecuted. The psalm begins with what is really the psalmist's conclusion, that God is good to His children, and then proceeds to show how the psalmist reached this conclusion, the poem being about equally divided between consideration of the problem and its solution. The psalmist had almost given up his faith in God. His own attempts to solve the problem ended in frustration and futility, until, in quiet communion with God, he found the ultimate answer. The psalm closes with a confession of God's goodness and a solemn vow to declare to others His wonderful works of love. The psalm teaches that God rewards our honest search for an answer to the problem with His gift of triumphant faith. "Truly God is good to Israel."

An Introductory Statement

1. With what basic truth does this psalm begin? Ps. 73:1.

NOTE.—The rest of the psalm explains how David arrived at this conclusion. Notwithstanding all the difficulties recited in the psalm, it is fundamentally true that God is "the friend of His people—the friend of righteousness."—Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Book of Psalms,* vol. 2, p. 253.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good!
—Whittier, "The Eternal Goodness."

2. What had been the psalmist's state of mind prior to his reaching the conclusion of verse 1? Verse 2.

NOTE.—"The phrase [But as for me] concentrates our attention upon the psalmist and the experiences through which he passed in arriving at the solution of the problem of the psalm: Why do bad men prosper, and good men suffer?"—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 73:2.

The psalmist had almost lost his faith; he was on the verge of slipping into the pit of skepticism.

The Apparent Prosperity of the Wicked

3. What observation had caused the psalmist to doubt God's goodness? Verse 3.

4. In what various ways is the apparent prosperity of the wicked described? Verses 4-9.

NOTE.—"Many seek to make a heaven for themselves by obtaining riches and power. They 'speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily' (Psalm 73: 8), trampling upon human rights and disregarding divine authority. The proud may be for a time in great power, and may see success in all that they undertake; but in the end they will find only disappointment and wretchedness."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 124.

5. What further indication of the apparent success of the wicked is given? Verses 10, 11.

NOTE.—"The meaning is, that His people, as they return again and again to this subject (v. 10), are constrained to put this question. They are compelled by these facts to start such painful inquiries about God; and distressing as the inquiries are, and as are the doubts which they involve, these thoughts *will* pass through their mind, even though to avoid giving needless pain to those who have no such perplexities and difficulties they keep these thoughts to themselves, v. 15."—Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Book of Psalms,* vol. 2, p. 256.

"But there is a line beyond which they [the wicked] cannot pass. The time is near when they will have reached the prescribed limit. Even now they have almost exceeded the bounds of the long-suffering of God, the limits of His grace, the limits of His mercy. The Lord will interpose to vindicate His own honor, to deliver His people, and to repress the swellings of unrighteousness."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* pages 177, 178.

6. How does the psalmist contrast the suffering of his own experience with the apparent success of the wicked? Verses 12-14.

NOTE.—"From age to age the Lord has made known the manner of His working. When a crisis has come, He has revealed Himself, and has interposed to hinder the working out of Satan's plans. With nations, with families, and with individuals, He has often permitted matters to come to a crisis, that His interference might become marked. Then He has made manifest that there is a God in Israel who will maintain His law and vindicate His people."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 178.

The Solution of the Problem

7. Where did the psalmist find the solution to his problem? Verses 15-17.

NOTE.—While communing with his Lord in the sanctuary, the psalmist better understood the end of the wicked. Wrote Ellen G. White:

"God permits the wicked to prosper and to reveal their enmity against Him, that when they shall have filled up the measure of their iniquity all may see His justice and mercy in their utter destruction. The day of His vengeance hastens, when all who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people will meet the just recompense of their deeds; when every act of cruelty or injustice toward God's faithful ones will be punished as though done to Christ Himself."—*The Great Controversy,* page 48.

8. What is the true condition of the wicked? Verses 18-20.

NOTE.—"That which restores the psalmist's faith is his recognition of the end of the wicked in this world, of their downfall in the midst of their prosperity. Loss of perspective had kept the psalmist from seeing the retribution that often came upon the wicked, until he went into the sanctuary and cast himself wholly upon God. He had forgotten that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire from heaven; that Pharaoh's land was ruined by the plagues and his armies were drowned in the sea."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 73:18.

9. In what frame of mind had the psalmist attempted to solve his problem? Verses 21, 22.

NOTE.—The Hebrew for "was grieved" might well be translated "grew sour, became embittered." The psalmist, brooding over his own trials, acted like "a beast," controlled by his emotions and not by his reason. He tried to solve the problem in a sour frame of mind, judging by superficial appearances and not by eternal values.

10. What personal recognition here and now comforts the psalmist as he solves the problem of the psalm? Verses 23, 24, first part.

NOTE.—The sublimity and beauty of these verses in thought and expression cannot be overemphasized. "They lift us above the world, above doubts, and fears, and perplexities, into a higher and holier atmosphere: we breathe the air of heaven. The man who can truly use these words is not one who has 'crushed free thought,' but one who has seen all his doubts swallowed up in the full light of God's love. 'Though all else in heaven and earth should fail, the one true everlasting Friend abides.' "—J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms,* 1868 ed., vol. 2, p. 10.

It should be noted that this portion of the psalm stresses personal communion with God. " 'Enoch walked with God' (Gen. 5: 24) is more than a picturesque figure of speech. 'Walking with God' is a comprehensive expression that describes the fundamentals and the summits of religion."—Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms and Their Meaning for Today,* page 30.

11. What ultimate experience is recognized as the final solution to the problem, and what triumphant realization does the psalmist express? Verses 24 (second part), 25, 26.

NOTE.—"Like Enoch of the distant ages, of whom it had been written that he 'walked with God, and he was not, for God *received* him' (Gen. 5:24), the author of Psalm 73 is certain that his communion with the Lord of life shall last forever."—Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms and Their Meaning for Today,* page 259.

The Conclusion

12. How does the psalmist again describe the ultimate end of the wicked? Verse 27.

NOTE.—The Revised Standard Version reads: "For lo, those who are far from Thee shall perish; Thou dost put an end to those who are false to Thee."

"Grant that I may not criticize my neighbor until I have walked a mile in his moccasins."—Indian prayer.

13. To what positive personal conclusion does the psalmist come? Verse 28, first part.

NOTE.—"When we draw nigh to God He draws nigh to us (see James 4:8). There is a beautiful reciprocal relationship between man and God: the closer we draw to Him, the more fully He is able to reveal Himself."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 73:28.

14. With what solemn resolution does the psalm close? Verse 28, second part.

NOTE.—"The psalmist recognizes his responsibility to tell others how he has passed from doubt to confidence, how he has solved in the Lord Jehovah the problem that is the theme of the psalm. The psalm closes with this solemn vow."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 73:28.

For Meditation

1. How can I keep from losing my perspective and exaggerating the prosperity of the wicked?
2. Am I learning to refrain from hurting others by remaining silent when doubt overwhelms, and going to God for the final solution of life's problems?
3. Do I vow with the psalmist to declare my faith in God and testify to His goodness by word and act every day of my life?

Lesson 12, for June 20, 1964

Thanksgiving for God's Loving-Kindness

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 103.

MEMORY VERSE: "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Ps. 103:1, 2.

STUDY HELPS: "The Ministry of Healing," pages 111-124; "Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 113-116 (1943 ed., pp. 166-169); "Steps to Christ," chapter "Rejoicing in the Lord;" "Testimonies," vol. 5, pp. 315-319; Deuteronomy 4 to 10; 27 to 31.

AIM: To impress us with God's infinite loving-kindness and to encourage us to express gratitude for His goodness.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1, 2; learn memory verse.	☐
Monday: Questions 3-7.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8, 9; begin reading study helps.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 10-13.	☐
Thursday: Finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. Praise to God for Personal Blessings
1. The inclusiveness of praise. Ps. 103:1, 2.
2. The extent of blessings. Vs. 3-5.

II. Revelation of God's Loving-Kindness
3. His justice. V. 6
4. His dealings with Israel. V. 7.
5. His character. Vs. 8, 9.
6. His forgiveness. Vs. 10-12.
7. His compassion. Vs. 13, 14.

III. Man's Dependence Upon God's Mercy
8. Man's frailty. Vs. 15, 16.
9. God's eternal mercy. Vs. 17, 18.

IV. Universal Invitation to Worship God
10. God's universal reign. V. 19.
11. Invitation to angels. Vs. 20, 21.
12. Invitation to the whole creation. V. 22, first clause.
13. Final personal invitation. V. 22, second clause.

THE LESSON

Introduction

Psalm 103 is perhaps the best known of the psalms of thanksgiving. It is the outpouring of a full heart in praise to God for His infinite loving-kindness. In this psalm, David praises God for the blessings which he has experienced, and for the blessings which God has heaped upon His people, and invites God's creation to join him in a paean of universal praise. The hymn may be considered as a celebration of God's revelation of Himself to Moses: "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-

suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Ex. 34:6. In this age of distraction from things spiritual, it is a challenge to believers to "forget not all His benefits."

Praise to God for Personal Blessings

1. How inclusive is the psalmist's exhortation to praise God? Ps. 103: 1, 2.

NOTE.—"When a man blesses God, it means that he acknowledges God as the dispenser of salutary gifts. In the OT men are frequently said to bless God (see Ps. 63:4; 103:1, 2, 20-22; 145:2; etc)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 63:4.

When the psalmist bids his soul to bless God, he recognizes that his personality is distinct and different from that of every other individual in the world, and commands his own self to acknowledge in his own way the goodness of God. Worship is thus ultimately an individual matter.

"All that is within me. Nothing less than the use of all our faculties is sufficient to praise the Lord."—*Ibid.,* on Ps. 103:1.

The Psalmist warns himself not to forget God's benefits. See Deut. 4:9, 23; 6:12; 8:11, 14. "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."—*Life Sketches,* page 196.

Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!
—Kipling, "Recessional."

Forgetfulness is the secret spring of our ingratitude.

2. How extensive are God's blessings? Verses 3-5.

NOTE.—God forgives, heals, redeems, crowns, satisfies, renews. Surely a recognition of such generosity on God's part should impel His children to praise Him with all their faculties.

"Loving-kindness" covers the full scope of God's beneficent attitudes, relationships, and dealings with respect to men. Its New Testament equivalent is "love" as the ultimate designation of divine goodness toward men.

In using the figure "like the eagle's," "perhaps the psalmist has in mind the fact that the eagle lives longer than many other birds and keeps its vigor. The forgiven sinner shows the freshness of renewed youth." —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 103:5. In confinement an eagle has been known to live upwards of a hundred years.

Revelation of God's Loving-Kindness

3. How is God's love shown in His dealings with the oppressed? Verse 6.

NOTE.—In the Hebrew the word translated "righteousness" is plural; it may here be considered as meaning "acts of salvation," which are the result of God's righteousness. Likewise the word translated "judgment" is plural, meaning "judgments." It is translated "justice" in the Revised Standard Version.

4. How had God revealed Himself to Israel? Verse 7.

NOTE.—"God's ways are 'past finding out' (Rom. 11:33). They must be 'made known,' sometimes by divine revelation, as at Sinai (Ex. 20)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 103:7. When Moses asked God to show His ways, God revealed the attributes which characterize His dealings with men. See Ex. 33:13-23.

5. What phases of God's character are especially emphasized? Verses 8, 9. Compare Ex. 34:6; Isa. 57:16.

NOTE.—As a just God, He cannot overlook sin, but as a merciful God, He is sparing in His punishment.

6. What is the extent of God's forgiveness? Ps. 103:10-12. Compare Isa. 38:17; Micah 7:19.

NOTE.—The distance between heaven and earth is immeasurable. God's love is like Himself, infinite; it cannot be measured. Compare Eph. 3:17-19.

7. What is the basis of God's compassion? Ps. 103: 13, 14. Compare Deut. 32:6.

NOTE.—"Our frame" may mean "our formation," the manner in which we were formed. See Gen. 2:7. "Man's frailty and transitoriness are strong appeals to God's loving-kindness (see Gen. 8:21; Ps. 89:5; 139:1-18)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 103:14.

"Fathers and mothers and teachers need to appreciate more fully the responsibility and honor that God has placed upon them, in making them, to the child, the representatives of Himself. The character revealed in the contact of daily life will interpret to the child, for good or for evil, those words of God: 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.' "—*Education,* pages 244, 245.

Man's Dependence Upon God's Mercy

8. To what is man in his frailty compared? Ps. 103: 15, 16. Compare Ps. 90: 5; Isa. 40:6-8.

NOTE.—"The burning sirocco, the wind of the desert, . . . blows upon the flower, and almost immediately scorches it up. So man, when he flourishes most, is for the most part brought low by the wind of suffering, trouble, sickness, calamity, and sinks out of sight."—*The Pulpit Commentary,* 1950 ed., vol. 8, p. 383.

9. In contrast, how is God's mercy described? Ps. 103: 17, 18.

NOTE.—"For the third time God's mercy and loving-kindness is said to be upon 'them that fear Him,' . . . as if to remind us that there is a love within a love, a love which they only know who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, who fear Him and walk in His ways, as well as a love which 'maketh the sun to shine, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust.' "—J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms,* 1868 ed., vol. 2, p. 196.

God's mercy is assured to those "that love Me, and keep My commandments." Ex. 20:6.

"From the interweaving of these two contrasting elements—the awe of man before the law of holiness and the ready answer of man to the love which will not let him go—arises the distinctive mood of gratitude in which fear of a majestic God and love of an intimate friend commingle."—Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms and Their Meaning for Today,* page 208.

Universal Invitation to Worship God

10. How extensive is God's rulership? Verse 19.

NOTE.—"As often in the Psalter, the experience of Israel is recounted as teaching a lesson for all mankind. If the whole human race acknowledged His rule, His benefits would be enjoyed by all men."—*The Psalms* (Soncino edition), page 335.

11. Whom does David now call upon to bless the Lord? Verses 20, 21. Compare Ps. 148:2.

NOTE.—"We are informed in Scripture as to the number, and the power and glory, of the heavenly beings, of their connection with the government of God, and also of their relation to the work of redemption. 'The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all.' And, says the prophet, 'I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne.' In the presence chamber of the King of kings they wait—'angels, that excel in strength,' 'ministers of His, that do His pleasure,' 'hearkening unto the voice of His word.' Psalm 103:19-21; Revelation 5:11. Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, were the heavenly

messengers beheld by the prophet Daniel. The apostle Paul declared them an innumerable company.' "—*The Great Controversy,* pages 511, 512.

12. How extensive is the psalmist's invitation to bless the Lord? Ps. 103: 22, first clause. Compare Ps. 19:1-4; 145:10; 148:7-13.

NOTE—"The 'works of God'—*i.e.* His material universe—cannot, of course, be said to 'bless' God in the same sense that men and angels do; but, in a language of their own, they set forth His glory, and to the poetic mind seem truly to sing His praise." —*The Pulpit Commentary,* vol. 8, p. 383.

13. With what personal invitation does the psalm close? Ps. 103:22, second clause.

NOTE.—"After the universal paean of praise there is an infinite pathos in David's repetition of the phrase with which the psalm began. Conscious that the universe is now vocal with the praise of God he would also have his own voice heard."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 103:22.

"The song of thanksgiving which began as an intimate dialogue between a man and his soul—the totality of his being—has swollen to the volume of the universe. We hear for a few instants the hymns of the celestial chorus, but the final note reminds us of the psalmist's original intent. As the sound of brass, woodwinds, and strings is subdued in a swift decrescendo, the world fades out, and the immense perspectives are focused once more on the secret sanctuary of a single, serene, forgiven man, who then calls as he initially did, *sotto voce,* 'Bless Yahweh, O my soul!' "—Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms and Their Meaning for Today,* page 208.

For Meditation

1. How can I fulfill in my daily life the counsel to "forget not all His benefits"?
2. Am I actually experiencing God's blessings as promised in Ps. 103:3-5? If not, why not?
3. How do I reconcile God's mercy with His justice?

Lesson 13, for June 27, 1964

"Give Thanks Unto the Lord"

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Psalm 107.

MEMORY VERSE: "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" Ps. 107:8.

STUDY HELPS: "The Ministry of Healing," pages 251-256; "Testimonies," vol. 8, pp. 107-113; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary," on Psalm 107; selected psalms of thanksgiving: Psalms 95 to 100; 103; 104; 145 to 150.

AIM: To consider God's loving-kindness both in adversity and in prosperity, and thereby to arouse a spirit of constant gratitude.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey; learn memory verse.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-7; begin reading study helps.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-10.	☐
Wednesday: Questions 11-13; read further from study helps.	☐
Thursday: Questions 14, 15; finish reading study helps.	☐
Friday: Review entire lesson.	☐

Lesson Outline

Introduction

I. The Psalmist's Call to Give Thanks

1. A general call to the redeemed. Ps. 107:1-3.

II. God's Care for Wanderers

2. The exhausted condition of the wanderer. Vs. 4, 5.
3. God's answer to the wanderer's cry. Vs. 6, 7.
4. A reasonable call to praise God for His goodness. Vs. 8, 9.

III. God's Care for Prisoners

5. The helpless condition of the prisoner. Vs. 10-12.
6. God's answer to the prisoner's cry. Vs. 13, 14.
7. A reasonable call to praise God for deliverance. Vs. 15, 16.

IV. God's Care for the Afflicted

8. The hopeless condition of the afflicted. Vs. 17, 18.
9. God's answer to the cry of the afflicted. Vs. 19, 20.
10. A reasonable call to praise God for healing. Vs. 21, 22.

V. God's Care for Seafarers

11. The helpless condition of the seafarer in a storm. Vs. 23-27.
12. God's answer to the cry of the storm-tossed. Vs. 28-30.
13. A reasonable call to praise God for safe arrival. Vs. 31, 32.

VI. A Contrast

14. God's dealings with the righteous and the wicked. Vs. 33-41.

VII. The Psalmist's Appeal

15. Understanding promised to the wise observer. Vs. 42, 43.

THE LESSON

Introduction

Of great poetic charm, Psalm 107, a psalm of thanksgiving, has four symmetrical stanzas (verses 4-9, 10-16, 17-22, 23-32) introduced by a call to give thanks, and followed by a contrast of God's dealings with the righteous and the wicked and an appeal to the wise observer. Each of the four symmetrical stanzas follows this pattern: description of the calamity, prayer for help, God's immediate answer, call to give thanks, reason for thanksgiving. In each of these four stanzas appears a double refrain with slight variations (verses 6-9, 13-16, 19-22, 28-32). In an age marked by a lack of gratitude (see 2 Tim. 3:2), the psalm has a special message.

"How few hearts are full of gratitude and thanksgiving because they are called and honored to act a part in the work of God, being partakers with Christ of His sufferings!" —*Testimonies,* vol. 6, p. 426.

The Psalmist's Call to Give Thanks

1. To whom does the psalmist address his invitation to give thanks? Ps. 107:1-3.

NOTE.—"The redeemed, of all people, have most reason to say that God is good and that His mercy is everlasting. Far more than we do, we should relate what Christ has done for us, and our love for Him will deepen as we give expression to it."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 107:2.

"Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience. We should speak of the mercy and loving-kindness of God, of the matchless depths of the Saviour's love. Our words should be words of praise and thanksgiving."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 338.

The word translated "mercy," as used here, means "divine love," God's "loving-kindness." "The Psalmist was conscious that God's goodness and mercy were following him constantly (see on Ps. 23:6). In all the trying circumstances of life it is comforting to know that the great heart of God is full of loving-kindness and tender mercy toward the children of men."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 107:1.

"Let praise and thanksgiving be expressed in song. When tempted, instead of giving utterance to our feelings, let us by faith lift up a song of thanksgiving to God. . . .

"Song is a weapon that we can always use against discouragement. As we thus open

the heart to the sunlight of the Saviour's presence, we shall have health and His blessing."—*The Ministry of Healing,* page 254.

God's Care for Wanderers

2. How is the wanderer's condition described? Verses 4, 5.

NOTE.—Although this refers primarily to the experience of the children of Israel, we are all pilgrims and sojourners on earth, and God promises to lead us to the heavenly city. See Heb. 11:10. When despair is about to take hold of us, we should remember that the redeemed of God should take heart.

3. What is God's answer to the wanderer's cry for rescue? Verses 6, 7.

NOTE.—It seems natural for man to cry to God for help when he is pushed to extremity. How much better to recognize constantly His overruling providence and protecting hand!

The "right way" is literally the "straight way" or "level way." "The paths of sin are crooked ways. The straight way is the quickest and easiest route to our eternal home."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 107:7.

4. What reason for praising God does the wanderer have? Verses 8, 9.

NOTE.—"Even in the wilderness, Israel's needs were supplied. God furnished them with water from the flinty rock and provided bread from heaven for them. The same God lives still. He will satisfy all who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6). He never turns anyone away empty." —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 107:9.

God's Care for Prisoners

5. How helpless is the lot of the prisoner? Verses 10-12.

NOTE.—"This is a picture of every child of Adam before the great Deliverer comes to open the prison doors and set him free. The work of the Redeemer was to open the prison to them that were bound and proclaim liberty to the captives (see Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:17, 18)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 107:10.

6. What is God's answer to the prisoner's cry for deliverance? Verses 13, 14.

NOTE.—"When we come to the end of our earthly resources and appeal to God, He never fails to answer. Again and again the children of Israel were defeated in battle and brought into subjection by the enemy, but as soon as they cried unto the Lord for help, He raised up a deliverer to rescue them (Judges 3:7-9, 12-15; 4:1-4; 6:1-14; etc.)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 107:13.

7. What reason for thanksgiving does the prisoner have? Verses 15, 16.

NOTE.—"In olden times, to secure the gates of cities, it was customary to cover them with thick plates of brass and iron. This was a protection against the enemy. But brazen gates or iron bars cannot secure a city against falling into the hands of the instrument chosen by God to deliver His people."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Ps. 107:16.

God's Care for the Afflicted

8. What indicates the serious physical condition of those who depart from God? Verses 17, 18.

9. What is God's response to the cry of the afflicted for relief? Verses 19, 20.

NOTE.—"Often those who are in health forget the wonderful mercies continued to

"Every day some portion of the time should be appropriated to the study of the lessons."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 53.

them day by day, year after year, and they render no tribute of praise to God for His benefits. But when sickness comes, God is remembered. When human strength fails, men feel their need of divine help. And never does our merciful God turn from the soul that in sincerity seeks Him for help. He is our refuge in sickness as in health."—*The Ministry of Healing,* page 225.

10. By what acts should the afflicted one acknowledge God's goodness? Verses 21, 22.

God's Care for Seafarers

11. How is the plight of the seafarer in a storm described? Verses 23-27.

12. What is God's answer to the cry of the storm-tossed seafarer? Verses 28-30.

NOTE.—"Every man's experience testifies to the truth of the words of Scripture, 'The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest. . . . There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' Isa. 57:20, 21. Sin has destroyed our peace. While self is unsubdued, we can find no rest. The masterful passions of the heart no human power can control. We are as helpless here as were the disciples to quiet the raging storm. But He who spoke peace to the billows of Galilee has spoken the word of peace for every soul. However fierce the tempest, those who turn to Jesus with the cry, 'Lord, save us,' will find deliverance. His grace, that reconciles the soul to God, quiets the strife of human passion, and in His love the heart is at rest."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 336.

13. Where especially should the traveler express his thanksgiving? Verses 31, 32.

A Contrast

14. How are God's dealings with the righteous and the wicked contrasted? Verses 33-41.

NOTE.—"Minished" is an archaic word meaning "diminished" or "lessened."

The Psalmist's Appeal

15. What will the one understand who observes God's dealings with men, as illustrated in this psalm? Verses 42, 43. Compare Hosea 14:9.

NOTE.—"God speaks to us through His providential workings and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart. In our circumstances and surroundings, in the changes daily taking place around us, we may find precious lessons if our hearts are but open to discern them."—*Steps to Christ,* page 87.

"Things like this do not just happen of themselves; they are proofs of the sovereign and wise providence of God."—H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms,* page 761.

For Meditation

1. Am I learning to discern God's providences in the common affairs of life, in adversity as well as in prosperity?
2. What benefits do I derive from the fellowship of giving thanks in public worship?
3. What does this mean: "Man's extremity is God's opportunity"?

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING

June 27, 1964

Work Among the North American Indians

For the first time in the history of the church, the overflow this quarter is dedicated to work for the Indians of North America.

There are about 650,000 Indians in scattered groups in the United States and Canada, divided into some seventy-five linguistic families. Adhering in the past to the most primitive forms of religion, comparable to animism (the belief that all objects are possessed with an indwelling soul), the Indian now responds to the gospel of Christ when it is presented in kindness by those who have his best interests at heart.

The "everlasting gospel" of the third angel's message provides reality to the Indian's vision of his homeland. We cannot, and we must not, fail in inviting them to the tremendous tribal gathering of the great Chief of us all—Christ our Lord.

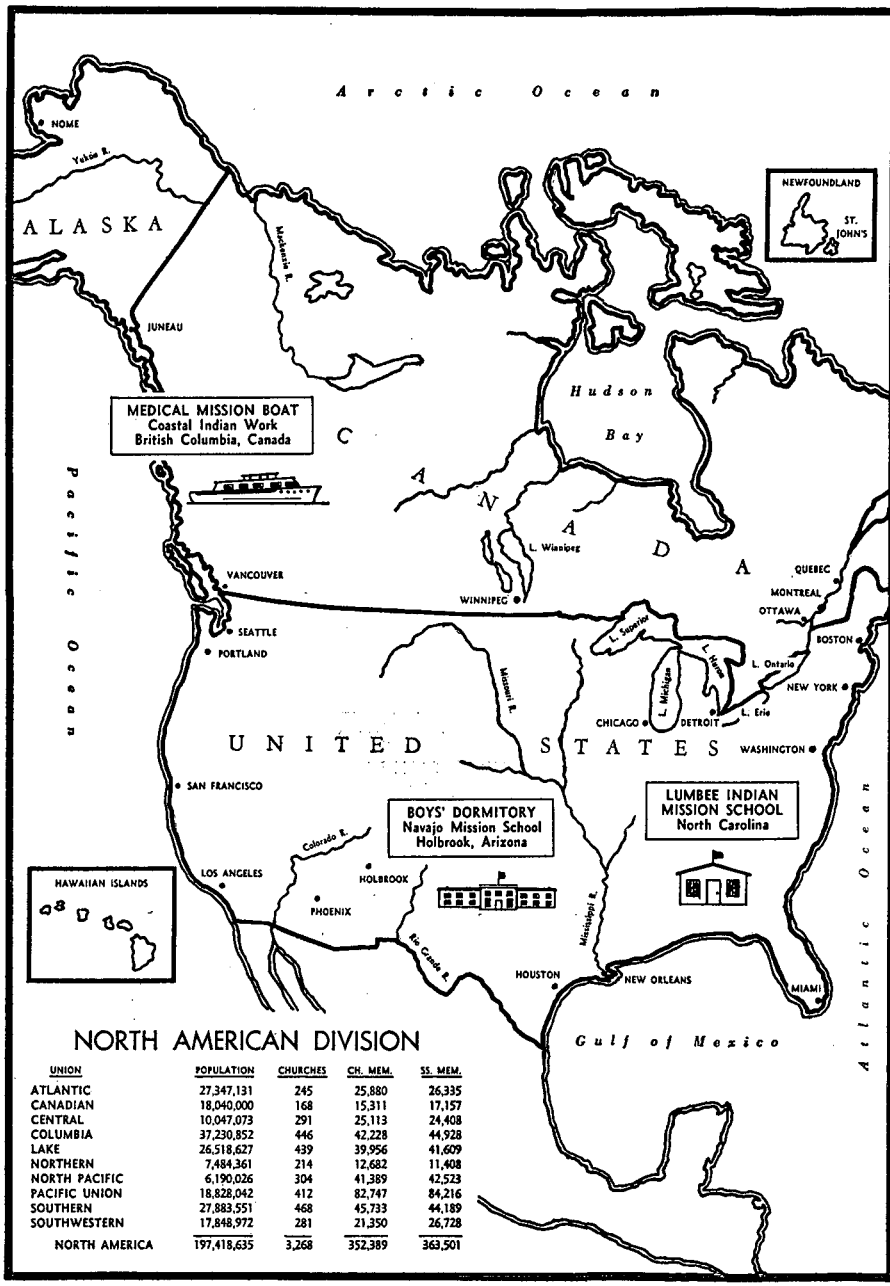
To help accomplish this mission, the Sabbath schools of the world are invited to contribute through the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on June 27 toward a boys' dormitory at the Navajo Mission School at Holbrook, Arizona; a medical mission boat to minister to the Indians along the coast in British Columbia; and the Lumbee Indian Mission School in North Carolina.

We believe the advent believers in all lands will welcome this opportunity to extend a helping hand to this mission field in the midst of the land that cradled the advent message and from which its beams have reached "clear round the world."

LESSONS FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1964

Sabbath school members who have failed to receive a senior *Lesson Quarterly* for the third quarter of 1964 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first lesson. The title of the lessons for the quarter is "The Christian Home and Healthful Living." The title of the first lesson is "Marriage, Its Divine Origin and Purpose." The memory verse is Prov. 18:22. The texts to be studied are:

Ques. 1. Gen. 2:18.
Ques. 2. Gen. 2:21-24.
Ques. 3. John 2:1, 2.
Ques. 4. Prov. 5:18.
Ques. 5. Gen. 24:67.
Ques. 6. Gen. 24:50, 58.
Ques. 7. Gen. 27:46; 28:1; 1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14.
Ques. 8. Heb. 13:4.
Ques. 9. Rom. 7:2; Matt. 19:6.
Ques. 10. Gen. 1:28.
Ques. 11. Gen. 2:24; Mark 10:6, 7.
Ques. 12. Mark 10:8, 9.
Ques. 13. Prov. 18:22; 19:14.



NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

UNION	POPULATION	CHURCHES	CH. MEM.	SS. MEM.
ATLANTIC	27,347,131	245	25,880	26,335
CANADIAN	18,040,000	168	15,311	17,157
CENTRAL	10,047,073	291	25,113	24,408
COLUMBIA	37,230,852	446	42,228	44,928
LAKE	26,518,627	439	39,956	41,609
NORTHERN	7,484,361	214	12,682	11,408
NORTH PACIFIC	6,190,026	304	41,389	42,523
PACIFIC UNION	18,828,042	412	82,747	84,216
SOUTHERN	27,883,551	468	45,733	44,189
SOUTHWESTERN	17,848,972	281	21,350	26,728
NORTH AMERICA	197,418,635	3,268	352,389	363,501