

The Faith of Our Fathers



Sabbath Bible Lessons

Senior Division

April-June 2004

- 5 **Genuine Faith**
- 10 **Abel, Enoch, Noah**
- 15 **Abraham**
- 20 **Isaac and Jacob**
- 26 **Joseph**
- 31 **Moses**
- 36 **The Conquest of Jericho**
- 41 **Instruments of God's Deliverance**
- 46 **Leadership by Faith**
- 52 **Paul**
- 57 **Biblical Faith**
- 62 **After the Scriptures Were Penned**
- 67 **A Call to Higher Ground**

Sabbath Bible Lessons, a daily study program, is based solely on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy without additional comments. The quotations are as brief as possible to provide concise, direct thoughts. Brackets [] are supplied in some cases to ensure clarity, proper context, and smooth readability. Further study in the source materials is strongly recommended.

Cover illustration: Photo Disc on pp. 1, 72.

Sabbath Bible Lessons (USPS 005-118), Vol. 79, No. 2, April-June 2004. Published quarterly by the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference, Sabbath School Department. Copyright © 2003, printed and distributed by Reformation Herald Publishing Association, 5240 Hollins Road, Roanoke, Virginia 24019-5048, USA. Periodical postage paid at Roanoke, Virginia 24022-9993. Telephone 540-366-9400 * USA and Canada 1888-712-1234 * Fax 540-366-2814 * Internet <http://www.sdarm.org> * E-mail: gc@sdarm.org

Annual subscriptions: U.S.A. \$9.95. Other countries \$13.00, or by AIRMAIL \$17.00. Single copies \$4.50. Please send subscription requests and payments (in U.S. currency only) to the address below. Prices subject to change without notice.

POSTMASTER, please send address changes to: *Sabbath Bible Lessons*, P.O. Box 7240, Roanoke, VA 24019-0240.

Foreword

For the next three months, Sabbath school students around the world will be focusing on *The Faith of Our Fathers* based largely on Hebrews chapter 11. Why? Even in these days of peril and uncertainty, “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” (*The Review and Herald*, October 12, 1905).

“Although the patriarchs and apostles were subject to human frailties, yet through faith they obtained a good report, fought their battles in the strength of the Lord, and conquered gloriously.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 15.

“We read the biographies of Christians, and think their experience and attainments entirely beyond our reach. These, we say, are the histories of a few who were specially favored by grace. But these high attainments are for all. Christ died for every soul, and God assures us in His word that He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. We may be engaged in the common duties of everyday life, but we can make these sacred by simple, earnest faith, and persevering, trusting prayer. God is honored by the steadfast integrity, the holy walk and conversation of His people, even in the humblest walks of life.

“The apostles and prophets and holy men of old did not perfect their characters by miracle. They used the ability given them by God, trusting alone in the righteousness of Christ; and all who will use the same means may secure the same result. It is our privilege to have high spiritual attainments; for God’s word has declared it. But these call for faith and labor on our part. We must have an earnest desire for higher and still higher attainments in the Christian life. Paul exhorts us to ‘grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’ This means a close connection with God, which will give us trust and confidence in Him, until we have an experimental knowledge of His divine nature, and are changed into His image. Then we can glorify God by revealing to those with whom we associate the result of the transforming influence of His grace.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 26, 1900.

Brethren and sisters, let us take hold of this grace so abundantly available to us. Over the next three months, let us consider deeply and prayerfully the ways by which the Lord so mightily worked in behalf of patriarchs, prophets, men and women of old, as well as for our own pioneers of recent history. The Lord is calling upon each one of us to appropriate these wonderful blessings to ourselves, and come to higher ground! Shall we not heed His loving call?

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering

Ebenezer Missionary School (Colombia)

The work of Reformation has been firmly established in Colombia. This country, organized as a Field attached to the General Conference, has the third largest membership of any country in the South American Region.

The brethren in Colombia have transformed their Sabbath schools into active missionary societies. Souls are being won to the Saviour every day in this country. But the increase in missionary work has resulted in an increased need for trained workers. As a result the Colombian Field has established the Ebenezer complex. This facility functions as a missionary school for the Field, training the next generation of gospel workers. In addition there is a primary education facility under construction, and plans have been drawn up for a sanitarium to be constructed on the same property.

Your help is needed to complete these projects. Please give generously on April 3 to the advancement of the work in Colombia. We also invite you to come and visit us here and attend one of our many conventions, youth meetings, and seminars.

Your brethren and sisters from the Colombian Field

“We thank God that our Sabbath schools have contributed enough to advance many a precious enterprise. Children and youth have given their pennies, that, like little rivulets, have supplied a stream of beneficence. Children should be educated in such a way that they may perform unselfish acts which heaven will rejoice to see. When the dew of youth is upon them, children should be trained how to do service for Christ. They should be taught self-denial.”—*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*, p. 113.

PROJECT 001



Genuine Faith

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

“To depend upon what we can see is not faith. Faith depends upon God’s promises.”—*Sabbath School Worker*, July 1, 1895.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 255–264.
Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 44, 45, 112–116.

Sunday

March 28

1. LIVING BY THE INVISIBLE

- a. **What simple definition does the Bible give for faith? Hebrews 11:1. How is faith in God to affect us in a practical way?**

“Faith is trusting God—believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good. Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way.”—*Education*, p. 253.

“All things are possible with God, and by faith we may lay hold on His power. But faith is not sight; faith is not feeling; faith is not reality. ‘Faith is the substance of things *hoped* for, the evidence of things *not seen*’ (Hebrews 11:1). To abide in faith is to put aside feeling and selfish desires, to walk humbly with the Lord, to appropriate His promises, and apply them to all occasions, believing that God will work out His own plans and purposes in your heart and life by the sanctification of your character; it is to rely entirely, to trust implicitly, upon the faithfulness of God.”—*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 115 (author’s italics).

- b. **Why can we be inspired by the faith of our forefathers? Hebrews 11:2.**

“Although the patriarchs and apostles were subject to human frailties, yet through faith they obtained a good report, fought their battles in the strength of the Lord, and conquered gloriously. Thus may we trust in the virtue of the atoning sacrifice and be overcomers in the name of Jesus.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 15.

2. MARVELS OF GOD'S CREATION

- a. Describe the marvelous way by which our God both creates and sustains. Hebrews 11:3; Psalm 33:8, 9; Acts 17:28 (first part).

“God is perpetually at work in nature. She is His servant, directed as He pleases. Nature in her work testifies of the intelligent presence and active agency of a being who moves in all His works according to His will. It is not by an original power inherent in nature that year by year the earth yields its bounties and continues its march around the sun. The hand of infinite power is perpetually at work guiding this planet. It is God's power momentarily exercised that keeps it in position in its rotation.

“The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing is too small for His attention.

“The mechanism of the human body cannot be fully understood; it presents mysteries that baffle the most intelligent. It is not as the result of a mechanism, which, once set in motion, continues its work, that the pulse beats and breath follows breath. In God we live and move and have our being. Every breath, every throb of the heart, is a continual evidence of the power of an ever-present God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 259, 260.

- b. How can God's creative power change our lives? Psalm 51:10; Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

“One of the most earnest prayers recorded in the Word of God is that of David when he pleaded, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God’ (Psalm 51:10). God's response to such a prayer is, A new heart will I give you. This is a work that no finite man can do. Men and women are to begin at the beginning, seeking God most earnestly for a true Christian experience. They are to feel the creative power of the Holy Spirit. They are to receive the new heart, that is kept soft and tender by the grace of heaven.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1165.

3. SEEK IN ORDER TO FIND

- a. What is needed in order to please God, and how only can we be truly blessed in seeking Him? Hebrews 11:6.

“Should you become alarmed for your own souls, should you seek God diligently, He will be found of you; but He will accept no half-hearted repentance. If you will forsake your sins, He is ever ready to forgive. Will you just now surrender to Him? Will you look to Calvary and inquire: ‘Did Jesus make this sacrifice for me? Did He endure humiliation, shame, and reproach, and suffer the cruel death of the cross because He desired to save me from the sufferings of guilt and the horror of despair, and make me unspeakably happy in His kingdom?’ Look upon Him whom your sins have pierced, and resolve: ‘The Lord shall have the service of my life. I will no longer unite with His enemies; I will no longer lend my influence to the rebels against His government. All I have and am is too little to devote to Him who so loved me that He gave His life for me—His whole divine self for one so sinful and erring.’ Separate from the world, be wholly on the Lord's side, press the battle to the gates, and you will win glorious victories.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 438, 439.

- b. Describe the way we are to seek God. Psalm 119:2, 145; 1 Chronicles 16:10–13.

“Let the soul be drawn out and upward, that God may grant us a breath of His heavenly atmosphere. Let the spirit groan after God, and mingle faith with fervent desire. We should encourage gratitude and praise, and always be found warring against every unholy impulse, crushing out of the soul every unclean lust. This is the warfare that must be accomplished. We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts may turn to God as naturally as the flower turns to the sun. The sunflower keeps its face sunward. If it is turned from the light, it will twist itself on the stem, until it lifts up its petals to the bright beams of the sun. So let everyone who has given his heart to God, turn to the Sun of Righteousness, and eagerly look up to receive the bright beams of the glory that shine in the face of Jesus.”—*The Signs of the Times*, December 16, 1889.

4. INTO A NEW REALM OF LIFE

- a. How does the faithful person stand in contrast to the proud one? Habakkuk 2:4.

“When the sinner, in view of all his transgressions, exercises faith in God, and believes that he is pardoned because Christ has died as his sacrifice, he will be filled with gratitude to God, and will have tender sympathy toward those who, like himself, have sinned and are in need of pardon. Pride will find no place in his heart. Such faith as this will be a death blow to a revengeful spirit. How is it possible for one who finds forgiveness, and who is daily dependent upon the grace of Christ, to turn away in coldness from those who have been overtaken in a fault and to display to the sinner an unforgiving spirit? Everyone who has real faith in God will crush pride under his feet. A view of the goodness and the mercy of God will lead to repentance, and will create a desire to possess the same spirit. He who receives the Spirit of God will have clear discernment to see the good there is in the characters of others, and will love those who need the tender, pitying sympathy of forgiveness. The repenting sinner sees in Christ a sin-pardoning Saviour, and contemplates with hope and confidence the pardon written over against his sin. He wants the same work to be done for his associates; for true faith brings the soul into sympathy with God.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 7, 1895.

- b. How is faith closely linked together with God’s law, a turning away from sin, and deliverance from it? Romans 14:23 (last part); 1 John 3:4–6.

“There must be a revival of the strait testimony. The path to heaven is no smoother now than in the days of our Saviour. All our sins must be put away. Every darling indulgence that hinders our religious life must be cut off. The right eye or the right hand must be sacrificed if it cause us to offend. Are we willing to renounce our own wisdom and to receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child? Are we willing to part with self-righteousness? Are we willing to give up our chosen worldly associates? Are we willing to sacrifice the approbation of men? The prize of eternal life is of infinite value. Will we put forth efforts and make sacrifices proportionate to the worth of the object to be attained?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 222.

5. A STREAM THAT NEVER RUNS DRY

- a. How does the Lord explain the far-reaching extent to which our faith can be exercised? Mark 11:22–24; Luke 17:5, 6.

“Faith takes God at His word, with or without feeling.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 15, 1884.

“If men will endure the necessary discipline, without complaining or fainting by the way, God will teach them hour by hour, and day by day. He longs to reveal His grace. If His people will remove the obstructions, He will pour forth the waters of salvation in abundant streams through the human channels.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 251.

“There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. All who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to His service will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in mind and heart. Through the grace given us we may achieve victories that because of our own erroneous and preconceived opinions, our defects of character, our smallness of faith, have seemed impossible.

“To everyone who offers himself to the Lord for service, withholding nothing, is given power for the attainment of measureless results. For these God will do great things. He will work upon the minds of men so that, even in this world, there shall be seen in their lives a fulfillment of the promise of the future state.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 159, 160.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is faith?
2. How do doubts which often can arise in conjunction with the theory of evolution hinder one’s spiritual potential?
3. What are some key elements needed in order to search out God successfully?
4. In what ways should my life come more into harmony with genuine faith?
5. What are the secrets to victorious Christian life at its fullest?

Abel, Enoch, Noah

“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

“The patriarchs, prophets, and all the holy martyrs from righteous Abel, looked forward to a coming Saviour, in whom they showed their faith by sacrificial offerings.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 7, 1879.

Suggested Readings: *The Faith I Live By*, p. 350.
Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 306–309.

Sunday

April 4

1. THE FAITH OF ABEL

- a. What are we to learn from the offering of Abel compared to Cain’s? Genesis 4:1–7.

“Abel, by faith in a future Redeemer, offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. His offering the blood of beasts signified that he was a sinner and had sins to put away, and that he was penitent and believed in the efficacy of the blood of the future great offering. Satan is the parent of unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion. He filled Cain with doubt and with madness against his innocent brother, and against God because his sacrifice was refused and Abel’s was accepted. . . .

“That which made Cain’s offering offensive to God was his lack of submission and obedience to the ordinance of His appointment. He thought that his own plan, in offering to God merely the fruit of the ground, was nobler, and not as humiliating as the offering of the blood of beasts, which showed dependence upon another, thus expressing his own weakness and sinfulness. Cain slighted the blood of the atonement.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 3, 1874.

“The matter was plainly laid open before Cain; but his combativeness was aroused because his course was questioned, and he was not permitted to follow his own independent ideas.”—*The Signs of the Times*, September 16, 1886.

“The offering of Cain was an offense to God because it was a Christless offering. The burden of our message is not only the commandments of God, but the faith of Jesus.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 162.

Monday

April 5

2. THE FIRST MARTYRDOM

- a. What was Cain’s attitude, and why must we avoid it? Genesis 4:8; 1 John 3:10–12.

“Cain invites Abel to walk with him in the fields, and he there gives utterance to his unbelief and his murmuring against God. He claims that he was doing well in presenting his offering; and the more he talks against God, and impeaches his justice and mercy in rejecting his own offering and accepting that of his brother Abel, the more bitter are his feelings of anger and resentment.

“Abel defends the goodness and impartiality of God, and places before Cain the simple reason why God did not accept his offering.

“The fact that Abel ventured to disagree with him and even went so far as to point out his errors astonished Cain. It was a new experience; for Abel had hitherto submitted to the judgment of his elder brother; and Cain was enraged to the highest degree that Abel did not sympathize with him in his disaffection. Abel would yield when conscience was not concerned; but when the course of the God of heaven was brought in question, and Cain spoke derisively of the sacrifice of faith, Abel was courageous to defend the truth. Cain’s reason told him that Abel was right when he spoke of the necessity of presenting the blood of a slain victim if he would have his sacrifice accepted; but Satan presented the matter in a different light. He urged Cain on to a furious madness, till he slew his brother.”—*The Signs of the Times*, December 16, 1886.

- b. What great truths did Abel understand? Hebrews 9:22; 11:4; Romans 6:23.

“There are multitudes who have no desire to come to God’s terms, but who make terms for themselves, and expect God to accept them. Such a religion is of the same character as that of Cain. The great question should be, What can I do to meet the approval of God? not, How can I best please myself?”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 6, 1879.

“Those who feel that they can be moral without divine help, who feel no need of the blood of Christ, are betrayed into grievous sins. If they do not gladly, gratefully, accept the cleansing blood, they are under condemnation. There is no other provision made whereby they can be released from sin’s terrible thralldom.”—*Ibid.*, September 11, 1884.

3. ENOCH

- a. What is written of Enoch, the seventh from Adam? Hebrews 11:5; Genesis 5:24.
-
- b. In what ways is the experience of Enoch to be repeated in the life of God's remnant preparing for the second coming of Christ? Jude 14, 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18.
-

"Enoch became a preacher of righteousness, bearing God's message to all who would hear the words of warning. In the land where Cain had sought to flee from the divine presence, the prophet of God made known the wonderful scenes that had passed before his vision. . . .

"The power of God that wrought with His servant was felt by those who heard. Some gave heed to the warning and renounced their sins; but the multitudes mocked at the solemn message. The servants of God are to bear a similar message to the world in the last days, and it also will be received by the majority with unbelief and mockery.

"As year after year passed, deeper and deeper grew the tide of human guilt, darker and darker gathered the clouds of divine judgment. Yet Enoch, the witness of faith, held on his way, warning, pleading, and teaching, striving to turn back the tide of guilt and to stay the bolts of vengeance.

"The men of that generation mocked the folly of him who sought not to gather gold or silver, or to build up possessions here. But Enoch's heart was upon eternal treasures. He had looked upon the celestial city. He had seen the King in His glory in the midst of Zion. The greater the existing iniquity, the more earnest was his longing for the home of God. While still on earth, he dwelt by faith in the realms of light.

"'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God' (Matthew 5:8). For three hundred years Enoch had been seeking purity of heart, that he might be in harmony with heaven. For three centuries he had walked with God. Day by day he had longed for a closer union; nearer and nearer had grown the communion, until God took him to Himself. He had stood at the threshold of the eternal world, only a step between him and the land of the blest; and now the portals opened, the walk with God, so long pursued on earth, continued, and he passed through the gates of the holy city. . . .

"To such communion God is calling us. As was Enoch's, so must be their holiness of character who shall be redeemed from among men at the Lord's second coming."—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 52-54.

4. THE DAYS OF NOAH

- a. How had the moral condition of the world deteriorated even further by the time Noah came along? Genesis 6:5-7, 13.
-
- b. What are some of the various ways in which our society today is similar to that of Noah's time? Matthew 24:37-39.
-

"The inhabitants of the antediluvian world turned from Jehovah, refusing to do His holy will. They followed their own unholy imagination and perverted ideas. It was because of their wickedness that they were destroyed; and today the world is following the same way. It presents no flattering signs of millennial glory. The transgressors of God's law are filling the earth with wickedness. Their betting, their horse racing, their gambling, their dissipation, their lustful practices, their untamable passions, are fast filling the world with violence."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 633.

"Every emotion, every impulse and imagination, was at war with the divine principles of purity and peace and love. It was an example of the awful depravity resulting from Satan's policy to remove from God's creatures the restraint of His holy law."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 79.

"Very plainly Christ saw that the condition of society would be in the future. He saw that self-indulgence would control men and women. What of the marriage relation today? Is it not perverted and defiled, made even as it was in Noah's day? Divorce after divorce is recorded in the daily papers. This is the marriage of which Christ speaks when He says that before the Flood they were 'marrying and giving in marriage' (Matthew 24:38).

"Before the flood there was violence in the land—heart-sickening violence. What is acted out constantly in our cities today? Men are killing women and women are killing men."—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, pp. 56, 57.

5. THE FAITH OF NOAH

- a. How was Noah very distinct among the people of his day? Genesis 6:9, 13; 7:1, 5.

“While Noah was giving his warning message to the world, his works testified of his sincerity. It was thus that his faith was perfected and made evident. He gave the world an example of believing just what God says.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 95.

- b. Why are we to be inspired by Noah’s faith? Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:17–22.

“The world is fast becoming as it was in the days of Noah. Satan is working with intensity of effort, knowing that he has but a short time. Wickedness prevails to an appalling extent. God’s people are but a handful, compared with the ungodly, and we can gain success only as we cooperate with the heavenly angels, who will go before all who press forward to do that which God has said should be done.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 15, 1905.

“God will have a people zealous of good works, standing firm amid the pollutions of this degenerate age. There will be a people who hold so fast to the divine strength that they will be proof against every temptation. Evil communications in flaming handbills may seek to speak to their senses and corrupt their minds; yet they will be so united to God and angels that they will be as those who see not and hear not. They have a work to do which no one can do for them, which is to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 472.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the various ways in which the attitude of Cain is manifested today?
2. How can I cultivate the spirit of Abel?
3. What characteristics of Enoch are essential for us to have?
4. What are some of the most compelling evidences that Christ will return soon?
5. Why does the life of Noah provide such a prime example of righteousness by faith?

Abraham

“Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him” (Isaiah 51:1, 2).

“Abraham’s unquestioning obedience is one of the most striking evidences of faith to be found in all the Bible.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 126.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 523, 524.
Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 125–131, 141–155.

1. A MAN WHOM GOD COULD TRUST

- a. Describe Abraham’s background and what distinguished him. Genesis 11:26–32.

“Although [Abraham’s] own father was vacillating between the true and the false worship, and with his knowledge of the truth false theories and idolatrous practices were mingled, Abraham kept free from this infatuation. He was not ashamed of his faith, and made no effort to hide the fact that he made God his trust.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, March 4, 1897.

- b. How was God eventually to describe the trust He placed in this patriarch? Genesis 18:17–19.

“God designed that Abraham should be a channel of light and blessing, that he should have a gathering influence, and that God should have a people on the earth. Abraham was to be in the world, reflecting in his life the character of Jesus. When he received the divine call, Abraham was not a man of renown, neither a lawgiver, nor a conqueror. He was a simple herdsman, dwelling in tents, but employing a large number of workmen to carry on his humble employment. And the honor which he received was because of his faithfulness to God, his strict integrity and just dealing.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, March 4, 1897.

2. FATHER OF A PECULIAR NATION

- a. What was the first major step of faith that Abraham was called to perform, and why? **Genesis 12:1-7; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.**
-
-

“God selected Abraham as His messenger through whom to communicate light to the world. The word of God came to him, not with the presentation of flattering prospects in this life of large salary, of great appreciation and worldly honor. . . . He forsook his country, his home, his relatives, and all pleasant associations connected with his early life, to become a pilgrim and a stranger. . . .

“Before God can use him, Abraham must be separated from his former associations, that he may not be controlled by human influence or rely upon human aid. Now that he has become connected with God, this man must henceforth dwell among strangers. His character must be peculiar, differing from all the world.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), pp. 23, 24.

- b. What was Abraham seeking? **Hebrews 11:8-10. How are we to follow his example?**
-

“With only the naked promise that [Abraham’s] descendants should possess Canaan, without the least outward evidence, he followed on where God should lead, fully and sincerely complying with the conditions on his part, and confident that the Lord would faithfully perform His word. The patriarch went wherever God indicated his duty; he passed through wildernesses without terror; he went among idolatrous nations, with the one thought: ‘God has spoken; I am obeying His voice; He will guide, He will protect me.’

“Just such faith and confidence as Abraham had the messengers of God need today. But many whom the Lord could use will not move onward, hearing and obeying the one Voice above all others. The connection with kindred and friends, the former habits and associations, too often have so great an influence upon God’s servants that He can give them but little instruction, can communicate to them but little knowledge of His purposes; and often after a time He sets them aside, and calls others in their place, whom He tests in the same manner. The Lord would do much more for His servants if they were wholly consecrated to Him, esteeming His service above the ties of kindred and all other earthly associations.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 24.

3. A FAMILY’S FAITH TESTED

- a. Why were the names of both Abram and Sarai changed? **Genesis 17:1-8, 15, 16.**
-
-

- b. What reveals the tremendous spiritual growth of Sarah? **Genesis 18:1, 10-14; 21:1, 2, 6, 7; Hebrews 11:11, 12.**
-
-

- c. What was the greatest test ever to befall Abraham? **Genesis 22:1-3, 10-14.**
-
-

“Isaac had been a comfort, a sunbeam, a blessing to Abraham in his old age, and although this gift of God seemed so precious, so dear to him, he was now commanded to return it to the Giver.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 3, 1879.

- d. Why was this test given to Abraham? **John 8:56.**
-

“This terrible ordeal was imposed upon Abraham that he might see the day of Christ, and realize the great love of God for the world, so great that to raise it from its degradation, He gave His only-begotten Son to a most shameful death.

“Abraham learned of God the greatest lesson ever given to mortal. His prayer that he might see Christ before he should die was answered. He saw Christ; he saw all that mortal can see, and live. By making an entire surrender, he was able to understand the vision of Christ, which had been given him. He was shown that in giving His only-begotten Son to save sinners from eternal ruin, God was making a greater and more wonderful sacrifice than ever man could make.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 469.

“Abraham’s test was the most severe that could come to a human being. Had he failed under it, he would never have been registered as the father of the faithful. Had he deviated from God’s command, the world would have lost an inspiring example of unquestioning faith and obedience.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, June 6, 1901.

4. LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM'S TEST

- a. What enabled Abraham to pass his greatest test victoriously? Hebrews 11:17.
-

- b. Why should we be inspired by all that Abraham actually believed about the creative power of God? Hebrews 11:18, 19.
-

“The lesson was given to shine down through the ages, that we may learn that there is nothing too precious to be given to God. It is when we look upon every gift as the Lord’s, to be used in His service, that we secure the heavenly benediction. Give back to God your entrusted possessions, and more will be entrusted to you. Keep your possessions to yourself, and you will receive no reward in this life, and will lose the reward of the life to come.

“God tries His people today to test their faith and obedience. There are many who have never made an unreserved surrender of themselves to God. They have not a right idea of the infinite sacrifice made by God to save a ruined world. If God should speak to them as He did to Abraham, they would not be sufficiently acquainted with His voice to know that He was calling upon them to make a sacrifice, in order to test the depth of their love and the sincerity of their faith.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, June 6, 1901.

“God has a right to every one of us, and it is not for anyone to question whether it is right, whether God should take this course or that course with us. Those who have perfect confidence in the Lord God of heaven will never question any of His dealings with His children. He has important experiences to give His children and He gives them this experience in His own way. Now Abraham verily believed and made the sacrifice to all intents and purposes in his heart. And that very faith was counted to him for righteousness. He thought and taught Isaac that God was able to raise him up from the dead and could see the end from the beginning. This is the very faith that we should have, every one of us, in the Lord God of heaven. We have the history of Abraham, and the ground the Lord brought him over, in order to give us strength and courage and faith. The Lord wants every one of us to believe that He is the very best friend we have. Abraham trusted God at every step and his faith was perfect.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, pp. 119, 120.

5. ABRAHAM—AND US

- a. Whom does Heaven view as the true children of Abraham—and therefore the actual heirs of the divine promises given to him? John 8:39; Galatians 3:8, 9, 14.
-

“Heart union with Christ makes believers heirs of God, and laborers together with Him. At home, at church, and in the world, the believer is to show forth the praises of Him who has called him out of darkness into His marvelous light.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 14, 1893.

- b. What qualities are we to reflect from this father of the faithful? Isaiah 51:1, 2.
-

“Abraham’s unselfish life made him indeed a ‘spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men’ (1 Corinthians 4:9). And the Lord declared He would bless those who blessed Abraham, and that He would punish those who misused or injured him. Through Abraham’s experience in his religious life a correct knowledge of Jehovah has been communicated to thousands; and his light will shed its beams all along the path of those who practice the piety, the faith, the devotion, and the obedience of Abraham. . . .

“As Abraham and other holy men of old were a light in their generation, so must God’s people be a light in the world. The beams of heaven’s attractive loveliness are to shine forth from us, showing the only good and right way, and ever showing the superiority of God’s law above every human enactment.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, March 4, 1897.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What made Abraham different from his forebears?
2. In what aspects of my life do I need to follow Abraham’s example of separation?
3. Why does the greatest trial of one’s life often turn out to be the greatest blessing?
4. Why was Abraham so successful in his spiritual life?
5. How can the spiritual blessings we receive from heaven be more far-reaching as Abraham’s were?

Isaac and Jacob

“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come” (Hebrews 11:20).

“Let us urge our petitions as did Jacob, and we shall find that importunate prayer will bring us precious victories.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 27, 1884.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 195–203.
The Great Controversy, pp. 615–622, 634.

Sunday

April 18

1. THE OBEDIENT LOVE OF ISAAC

- a. **When Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, what was the son’s response? Genesis 22:9.**

“The patriarch assured Isaac that his affection for him was not diminished, and that he would gladly give his own life to save that of his son. But God had chosen Isaac, and His requirement must be fulfilled to the letter. Abraham told his son that the Lord had miraculously given him to his parents, and now He had required him again. He assured him that the divine promise, ‘In Isaac shall thy seed be called’ (Genesis 21:12), would be fulfilled; that doubtless God would raise him to life again from the dead.

“Isaac at first heard the purpose of God with amazement amounting to terror. But he considered the matter fully. He was the child of a miracle. If God had accepted him as a worthy sacrifice, he would cheerfully submit. Life was dear, life was precious, but God had appointed him, Isaac, to be offered up as a sacrifice. He comforted his father, by assuring him that God had conferred honor upon him, in accepting him as an offering; that in this requirement he saw not the wrath and displeasure of God, but special tokens that the Lord loved him, in that he required him to be consecrated to himself in sacrifice. He encouraged the almost nerveless hands of his father to bind the cords which confined him to the altar. . . .

“Isaac felt that it was a privilege to yield his life as an offering to God. If the Lord could accept him, he felt that he was honored.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 3, 1879.

Monday

April 19

2. THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC

- a. **What lessons are to be learned from Isaac’s faith exercised in the choice of his wife? Genesis 24:1–4, 10–19, 63, 66, 67.**

“Evil associates include more than the immoral and profane. Connection with one who is known to be irreligious is contrary to God’s order, and cannot fail to draw the soul away from Him. Those who have not the fear of God before them, who are not seeking to live in obedience to Him, although they may be moral, intellectual, apparently refined, fashionable, wealthy, are not the ones for Christians to form a marriage alliance with. However agreeable their society may be, however entertaining their conversation, the word of God is plain upon the point; the Christian should not connect with them.

“Those who enter the marriage relation while unconverted should not after conversion leave their unbelieving companions. Whatever their religious character may be, they must remain faithful, kind, and true toward them; yet they should acknowledge the claims of God above any earthly relationship, serving Him with fidelity, even though inconvenience, trials, and persecutions may arise for the sake of Christ and the truth. This persevering fidelity to truth and duty may be a sanctifying influence upon the unbelieving companion. But marriages formed understandingly with unbelievers are forbidden by the word of God. . . . Satan has the victory; temptation has not been resisted, and in nine cases out of ten both parties are lost to Christ. . . .

“Young men and women sometimes manifest great independence upon the subject of marriage, as though the Lord had nothing to do with them, or they with the Lord, in that matter. They seem to think that it is purely a matter of their own, which neither God nor their parents should in any wise control, that the bestowal of their affections is a matter in which self alone should be consulted. Such make a serious mistake; and a few years of marriage experience generally teaches them that it is a miserable mistake. . . .

“Isaac had been trained in the fear of God to a life of obedience. And when he was forty years old, he submitted to have the God-fearing, experienced servant of his father choose for him. He believed that God would direct in regard to his obtaining a wife. . . .

“Isaac’s case is left on record, as an example for children in after generations, especially those who profess to fear God.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 10, 1879.

3. CONTRASTING TWINS

- a. How was Isaac's faith tested, then rewarded, after his marriage? Genesis 25:20-26.
-
- b. Describe the contrast between Esau and Jacob. Genesis 25:27-34. How and why are we to avoid the example of Esau? Hebrews 12:14-17.
-

"The circumstances of Esau's selling his birthright represents the unrighteous, who consider that the redemption purchased for them by Christ of little value, and sacrifice their heirship to heaven for perishable treasures. Many are controlled by their appetite, and rather than to deny an unhealthy appetite, will sacrifice high and valuable considerations. If one must be yielded, the gratification of a depraved appetite, or the high and heavenly blessings which God promises only to the self-denying and God-fearing, the clamors of appetite, as in the case of Esau, will generally prevail, and for self-gratification, God and heaven will be virtually despised. Even professed Christians will use tea, coffee, snuff, tobacco and spirits, all of which benumb the finer sensibilities of the soul. If you tell them they cannot have heaven and these hurtful indulgences, and that they should deny their appetites, and cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh, and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord, they are offended, look sorrowful, and conclude that if the way is so strait that they cannot indulge in their gross appetites, they will not walk any longer in it.

"Especially will the corrupt passions control the mind of those who value heaven of so little worth. Health will be sacrificed, the mental faculties enfeebled, and heaven will be sold for these pleasures, as Esau sold his birthright. Esau was a reckless person. He made a solemn oath that Jacob should have his birthright. This case is left on record as a warning to others."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 116, 117.

- c. Give examples of the way Scripture refers to Jacob. Psalm 22:23; 47:4; 78:5-8; 105:6-12. Though he failed to recognize it before, what was Isaac eventually to realize about Jacob? Hebrews 11:20, 21.
-

"Isaac lived many years after he gave Jacob the blessing, and was convinced, by the course of his two sons, that the blessing rightly belongs to Jacob."—*The Signs of the Times*, April 17, 1879.

4. A VICTORIOUS MAN

- a. Though serious flaws marred Jacob's record, what significant events did cause him to shine brightly nonetheless, to be a victorious father of faith? Genesis 32:24-30; 35:1-5.
-

"Jacob had chosen the inheritance of faith. He had endeavored to obtain it by craft, treachery, and falsehood; but God had permitted his sin to work out its correction. Yet through all the bitter experience of his later years, Jacob had never swerved from his purpose or renounced his choice. He had learned that in resorting to human skill and craft to secure the blessing, he had been warring against God. From that night of wrestling beside the Jabbok, Jacob had come forth a different man. Self-confidence had been uprooted. Henceforth the early cunning was no longer seen. In place of craft and deception, his life was marked by simplicity and truth. He had learned the lesson of simple reliance upon the Almighty Arm, and amid trial and affliction he bowed in humble submission to the will of God. The baser elements of character were consumed in the furnace fire, the true gold was refined, until the faith of Abraham and Isaac appeared undimmed in Jacob."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 208.

- b. Why was Jacob's name changed? Genesis 35:9, 10. What opportunity is before us for such a change to be ours? Revelation 2:17; 3:12.
-

"Jacob's persevering faith prevailed. He held fast the angel until he obtained the blessing he desired, and the assurance of the pardon of his sins. His name was then changed from Jacob, the supplanter, to Israel, which signifies a prince of God."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 119.

"[Jacob's] name was changed from one that was a reminder of his sin, to one that commemorated his victory."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 198.

"[Jacob's] name was changed, to correspond to the change in his character."—*The Review and Herald*, March 28, 1899.

"You each need a new and living experience in the divine life in order to do the will of God. No amount of past experience will suffice for the present nor strengthen us to overcome the difficulties in our path. We must have new grace and fresh strength daily in order to be victorious."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 541.

5. AN EXAMPLE FOR US

a. How are we to follow in the footsteps of Jacob? Psalm 84:8.

“We do not know what faith really is until we try to exercise it. We all need more of that firm, persevering faith that Jacob manifested while wrestling with the angel on that eventful night. Few realize how severely his faith was tested at that time. He had separated himself from all earthly friends, that he might be alone with God. All who made life dear to him were exposed to danger and death. The bitterest drop in his cup of anguish was the thought that his own sin had brought this great peril upon his wives and children, who were innocent of the sin of which he was guilty. He had decided to spend the night in humiliation and prayer. God could soften the heart of his brother. God was his only refuge and strength. In a desolate place, infested by robbers and murderers, he bowed in deep distress upon the earth. His soul was rent with anguish, and with earnest cries mingled with tears he made his prayer before God.”—*Historical Sketches of SDA Missions*, p. 131.

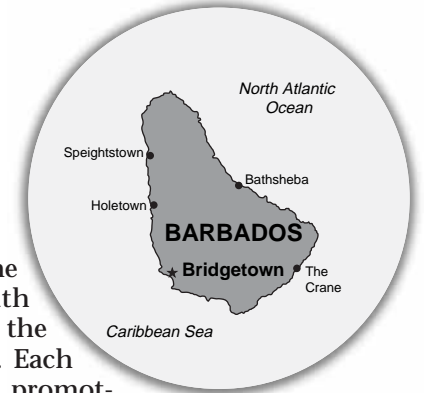
“It was through faith and prayer that Jacob, from being a man of feebleness and sin, became a prince with God. It is thus that you may become men and women of high and holy purpose, of noble life, men and women who will not for any consideration be swayed from truth, right, and justice. All are pressed with urgent cares, burdens, and duties, but the more difficult your position and the heavier your burdens, the more you need Jesus.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 511.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What qualities of Isaac should we be eager to cultivate?
2. How can a marriage be more successful even before it is contracted?
3. Most are familiar with the method by which Jacob got his birthright from his father (see Genesis chapter 27). What would have happened if he and his mother had not been so quick to snatch up what they thought of as their only chance?
4. In what ways should our prayer life reflect that of Jacob's?

First Sabbath Offering

Sabbath School Mission Development: Barbados



It is the primary object of the General Conference Sabbath School Department to develop the mission work in new territories. Each year the department focuses on promoting the lesson materials in at least one new country. This year the focus rests on the Central American Region, specifically the Caribbean island-nation of Barbados.

Approximately 254,000 people permanently inhabit the island, which is 21 miles long and 14 miles wide. But the key element in developing the work in Barbados is the fact that this island is one of the most visited tourist spots in the world. Visitors come from across the globe to experience the beauty of Barbados' white beaches. Building a lighthouse on this island will mean that God's Word will be spread far and wide.

The people of Barbados have a history of long ingrained Christian principles and a free educational system that boasts a literacy rate of 97%. The work of the Reform Movement in the eastern Caribbean has been primarily centered around the islands of St. Lucia, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. The development of the work in Barbados will increase the mission work on the English-speaking islands.

Please remember the work in Barbados and give generously on May 1, 2004.

David Zic, General Conference Secretary

“The offerings of little children may be acceptable and pleasing to God. In accordance with the spirit that prompts the gifts will be the value of the offering. . . . The plan of systematic benevolence will prove a safeguard to every family against temptations to spend means for needless things, and especially will it prove a blessing to the rich by guarding them from indulging in extravagances.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 412.

Joseph

“Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph” (Amos 5:15).

“Although surrounded with idolatry, which was most repulsive to his principles, Joseph preserved his simplicity, his purity, and his God-fearing fidelity.”—*The Signs of the Times*, January 8, 1880.

Suggested Readings: *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 126–160. *Education*, pp. 51–53.

Sunday

April 25

1. A YOUTH WITH MORAL INTEGRITY

- a. **What bright spot arose in Jacob’s family, even amidst the evil results of his grave mistake of fathering children by four women? Genesis 30:22–24; 37:3.**

“The jealousy of the several mothers had embittered the family relation, the children had grown up contentious and impatient of control, and the father’s life was darkened with anxiety and grief.

“There was one, however, of a widely different character—the elder son of Rachel, Joseph, whose rare personal beauty seemed but to reflect an inward beauty of mind and heart. Pure, active, and joyous, the lad gave evidence also of moral earnestness and firmness. He listened to his father’s instructions, and loved to obey God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 208, 209.

- b. **What was Satan’s plan to extinguish the light of Heaven? Genesis 37:4, 23–28. Why was it doomed to fail? Acts 7:8, 9.**

“Joseph was faithful to God, and his fidelity was a constant testimony to the true faith. It was to quench this light that Satan worked through the envy of Joseph’s brothers to cause him to be sold as a slave in a heathen land. God overruled events, however, so that the knowledge of Himself should be given to the people of Egypt.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 332.

Monday

April 26

2. RESISTING TEMPTATION

- a. **What reveals Joseph’s fidelity to God, even in the face of injustice from people? Genesis 39:3–10, 14, 20–23; Psalm 105:17–19.**

“Few temptations are more dangerous or more fatal to young men than the temptation to sensuality, and none if yielded to will prove so decidedly ruinous to soul and body for time and eternity. The welfare of his entire future is suspended upon the decision of a moment. Joseph calmly casts his eyes to heaven for help, slips off his loose outer garment, leaving it in the hand of his tempter and while his eye is lighted with determined resolve in the place of unholy passion, he exclaims, ‘How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?’ (Genesis 39:9). The victory is gained; he flees from the enchanter; he is saved.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 187.

“When [Joseph] was accused, and a base crime was falsely laid to his charge, he did not sink in despair. In the consciousness of innocence and right, he still trusted in God. And God, who had hitherto supported him, did not forsake him. He was bound with fetters, and kept in a gloomy prison. Yet God turned even this misfortune into a blessing. He gave him favor with the keeper of the prison, and to Joseph was soon committed the charge of all the prisoners.

“Here is an example to all generations who should live upon the earth. Although they may be exposed to temptations, yet they should ever realize that there is a defense at hand, and it will be their own fault if they are not preserved. God will be a present help, and His Spirit a shield. Although surrounded with the severest temptations, there is a source of strength to which they can apply and resist them. How fierce was the assault upon Joseph’s morals. It came from one of influence, the most likely to lead astray. Yet how promptly and firmly was it resisted. He suffered for his virtue and integrity; for she who would lead him astray, revenged herself upon the virtue she could not subvert, and by her influence caused him to be cast into prison, by charging him with a foul wrong. Here Joseph suffered because he would not yield his integrity. He had placed his reputation and interest in the hands of God. And although he was suffered to be afflicted for a time, to prepare him to fill an important position, yet God safely guarded that reputation that was blackened by a wicked accuser, and afterward, in his own good time, caused it to shine. God made even the prison the way to his elevation. Virtue will in time bring its own reward. The shield which covered Joseph’s heart, was the fear of God, which caused him to be faithful and just to his master, and true to God.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 131, 132.

3. AN ADMINISTRATOR DURING FAMINE

- a. **What did God intend for Egypt in bringing Joseph there? Psalm 105:20–22.**

“Both in the house of Potiphar and in the prison Joseph received an education and training that, with the fear of God, prepared him for his high position as prime minister of the nation. From the palace of the Pharaohs his influence was felt throughout the land, and the knowledge of God spread far and wide.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 332.

“Wonderful is the work which God designs to accomplish through His servants, that His name may be glorified. God made Joseph a fountain of life to the Egyptian nation. Through Joseph the life of that whole people was preserved.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 227.

- b. **How did the Lord shower His abundant mercy upon the repentant brothers of Joseph, who were eventually threatened with starvation? Acts 7:11–14; Genesis 50:19–21; Romans 8:28.**

“During the years since Joseph had been separated from his brothers, these sons of Jacob had changed in character. Envious, turbulent, deceptive, cruel, and revengeful they had been; but now, when tested by adversity, they were shown to be unselfish, true to one another, devoted to their father, and, themselves middle-aged men, subject to his authority.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 225.

“The people of Egypt, in order to supply themselves with food during the famine, had sold to the crown their cattle and lands, and had finally bound themselves to perpetual serfdom. Joseph wisely provided for their release; he permitted them to become royal tenants, holding their lands of the king, and paying an annual tribute of one fifth of the products of their labor.

“But the children of Jacob were not under the necessity of making such conditions. On account of the service that Joseph had rendered the Egyptian nation, they were not only granted a part of the country as a home, but were exempted from taxation, and liberally supplied with food during the continuance of the famine. The king publicly acknowledged that it was through the merciful interposition of the God of Joseph that Egypt enjoyed plenty while other nations were perishing from famine. He saw, too, that Joseph’s management had greatly enriched the kingdom, and his gratitude surrounded the family of Jacob with royal favor.”—*Ibid.*, p. 241.

4. JOSEPH’S FIRST AFFECTION REVEALED

- a. **What was the earnest desire of Joseph in behalf of his children? Hebrews 11:21.**

“Joseph, coming for a last interview with his father, brought with him Ephraim and Manasseh. These youths were connected, through their mother, with the highest order of the Egyptian priesthood; and the position of their father opened to them the avenues to wealth and distinction, should they choose to connect themselves with the Egyptians. It was Joseph’s desire, however, that they should unite with their own people. He manifested his faith in the covenant promise, in behalf of his sons renouncing all the honors that the court of Egypt offered, for a place among the despised shepherd tribes, to whom had been entrusted the oracles of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 234.

- b. **What final request of Joseph revealed that, despite his success in Egypt, his heart was not really based there? Genesis 50:24–26; Hebrews 11:22; Joshua 24:32.**

“[Joseph] witnessed the increase and prosperity of his people, and through all the years his faith in God’s restoration of Israel to the Land of Promise was unshaken.

“When he saw that his end was near, he summoned his kinsmen about him. Honored as he had been in the land of the Pharaohs, Egypt was to him but that place of his exile; his last act was to signify that his lot was cast with Israel. . . . And through the centuries of toil which followed, that coffin, a reminder of the dying words of Joseph, testified to Israel that they were only sojourners in Egypt, and bade them keep their hopes fixed upon the Land of Promise, for the time of deliverance would surely come.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 240.

“The example of Joseph, shining with heaven’s brightness, did not shine in vain among this people for whom Christ had pledged Himself to become an offering—a people whom God had taken under His guardianship, and upon whom He was bestowing not only temporal but spiritual blessings, in order to attract them to Himself.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, March 11, 1897.

5. A BEAUTIFUL ILLUSTRATION

- a. What are we to consider in studying the life of Joseph? Amos 5:14, 15.

“The life of Joseph illustrates the life of Christ. It was envy that moved the brothers of Joseph to sell him as a slave; they hoped to prevent him from becoming greater than themselves. And when he was carried to Egypt, they flattered themselves that they were to be no more troubled with his dreams, that they had removed all possibility of their fulfillment. But their own course was overruled by God to bring about the very event that they designed to hinder. So the Jewish priests and elders were jealous of Christ, fearing that He would attract the attention of the people from them. They put Him to death, to prevent Him from becoming king, but they were thus bringing about this very result.

“Joseph, through his bondage in Egypt, became a savior to his father’s family; yet this fact did not lessen the guilt of his brothers. So the crucifixion of Christ by His enemies made Him the Redeemer of mankind, the Saviour of the fallen race, and Ruler over the whole world; but the crime of His murderers was just as heinous as though God’s providential hand had not controlled events for His own glory and the good of man.

“As Joseph was sold to the heathen by his own brothers, so Christ was sold to His bitterest enemies by one of His disciples. Joseph was falsely accused and thrust into prison because of his virtue; so Christ was despised and rejected because His righteous, self-denying life was a rebuke to sin; and though guilty of no wrong, He was condemned upon the testimony of false witnesses.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 239, 240.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What character qualities did Joseph display even in his youth?
2. Why was God able to thwart Satan’s plans to ruin, or at least discourage, Joseph?
3. How can I apply Joseph’s management of the Egyptian food supply in my life?
4. In what ways should my priorities be more like Joseph’s?
5. How can my life be in closer parallel to that of Christ’s, as Joseph’s was?

Moses

“I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses” (Micah 6:4).

“Moses was selected to be the shepherd of God’s own people, and it was through his firm faith and abiding trust in the Lord that so many blessings reached the children of Israel.”—*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 117.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 469–480.
Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 290–302;
vol. 4, pp. 20–27.

1. THE CHILDHOOD OF MOSES

- a. Through God’s providence, Joseph was able to supply the Hebrews with a goodly heritage in the land of Goshen. But what happened after his death? Acts 7:15–19.

“[The descendants of Jacob] had kept themselves a distinct race, having nothing in common with the Egyptians in customs or religion; and their increasing numbers now excited the fears of the king and his people. . . .

“The king and his counselors had hoped to subdue the Israelites with hard labor, and thus decrease their numbers and crush out their independent spirit. Failing to accomplish their purpose, they proceeded to more cruel measures. Orders were issued . . . to destroy the Hebrew male children. . . . The whole nation was called upon to hunt out and slaughter his helpless victims.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 242.

- b. By a miracle of God, Jochebed was able to keep her infant son, Moses, throughout his early childhood before he would have to be given over to be reared by the daughter of Pharaoh. How did she utilize this precious time? Hebrews 11:23; Proverbs 6:22.

“[Jochebed] endeavored to imbue [Moses’] mind with the fear of God and the love of truth and justice, and earnestly prayed that he might be preserved from every corrupting influence.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 243, 244.

2. PREPARATION FOR A LIFEWORK

- a. **How did Moses develop in Egypt? Acts 7:21, 22. With all the splendor of the world's greatest nation at his future command, what did he decide? Hebrews 11:24-27.**
-
- b. **How and why was God to train Moses, and what were the results? Acts 7:23-35.**
-

"In the wilds of Midian, Moses spent forty years as a keeper of sheep. Apparently cut off forever from his life's mission, he was receiving the discipline essential for its fulfillment. Wisdom to govern an ignorant and undisciplined multitude must be gained through self-mastery. In the care of the sheep and the tender lambs he must obtain the experience that would make him a faithful, long-suffering shepherd to Israel. That he might become a representative of God, he must learn of Him.

"The influences that had surrounded him in Egypt, the affection of his foster mother, his own position as the grandson of the king, the luxury and vice that allured in ten thousand forms, the refinement, the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion, had made an impression on his mind and character. In the stern simplicity of the wilderness all this disappeared.

"Amidst the solemn majesty of the mountain solitudes Moses was alone with God. Everywhere the Creator's name was written. Moses seemed to stand in His presence and to be overshadowed by His power. Here his self-sufficiency was swept away. In the presence of the Infinite One he realized how weak, how inefficient, how short-sighted, is man. . . .

"To Moses faith was no guesswork; it was a reality. He believed that God ruled his life in particular; and in all its details he acknowledged Him. For strength to withstand every temptation, he trusted in Him.

"The great work assigned him he desired to make in the highest degree successful, and he placed his whole dependence upon divine power. He felt his need of help, asked for it, by faith grasped it, and in the assurance of sustaining strength went forward.

"Such was the experience that Moses gained by his forty years of training in the desert. To impart such an experience, Infinite Wisdom counted not the period too long or the price too great."—*Education*, pp. 62-64.

3. MIRACLES AT THE EXODUS

- a. **How was Moses able to establish before the people the authority entrusted to him by God, and how did Satan counterfeit it? Exodus 7:8-12; 8:16-18. What must we understand about the parallel to this phenomenon in the last days?**
-

"I was pointed back to the time of Moses and saw the signs and wonders which God wrought through him before Pharaoh, most of which were imitated by the magicians of Egypt; and that just before the final deliverance of the saints, God would work powerfully for His people, and these modern magicians would be permitted to imitate the work of God.

"That time will soon come, and we shall have to keep hold of the strong arm of Jehovah; for all these great signs and mighty wonders of the devil are designed to deceive God's people and overthrow them. Our minds must be stayed upon God, and we must not fear the fear of the wicked, that is, fear what they fear, and reverence what they reverence, but be bold and valiant for the truth. Could our eyes be opened, we should see forms of evil angels around us, trying to invent some new way to annoy and destroy us. And we should also see angels of God guarding us from their power; for God's watchful eye is ever over Israel for good, and He will protect and save His people, if they put their trust in Him. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him."—*Early Writings*, pp. 59, 60.

- b. **What miracles further accompanied the exodus, and how did the Lord endorse the leadership of Moses at this amazing time? Acts 7:36, 37; Psalms 103:6, 7; 105:26-42.**
-

"The Lord brought up His people from their long servitude in a signal manner, giving the Egyptians an opportunity to exhibit the feeble wisdom of their mighty men, and array the power of their gods in opposition to the God of heaven. The Lord showed them by His servant Moses that the Maker of the heavens and the earth is the living and all-powerful God, above all gods. That His strength was mightier than the strongest—that Omnipotence could bring forth his people with a high hand and with an outstretched arm. The signs and miracles performed in the presence of Pharaoh were not given for his benefit alone, but for the advantage of God's people."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 204, 205.

4. LESSONS FOR TODAY

- a. Why should we deeply appreciate some of the important illustrations cherished by the faithful ones participating in the exodus? 1 Corinthians 10:1–4; Hebrews 11:28.

“[The Passover sprinkling of blood] was a work required of the children of Israel, which they must perform on their part, to prove them and to show their faith by their works in the great deliverance God had been bringing about for them. In order to escape the great judgment of God which he was to bring upon the Egyptians, the token of blood must be seen upon their houses. And they were required to separate themselves and their children from the Egyptians, and gather them into their own houses, for if any of the Israelites were found in the houses of the Egyptians, they would fall by the hand of the destroying angel. . . .

“The Passover pointed backward to the deliverance of the children of Israel, and was also typical, pointing forward to Christ, the Lamb of God, slain for the redemption of fallen man.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 223–225.

- b. How can the miracle at the Red Sea apply to us? Hebrews 11:29; Exodus 14:10–16.

“There are times when the Christian life seems beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly above all discouragements: ‘Go forward.’ We should obey this command, let the result be what it may, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness and though we feel the cold waves about our feet.

“The Hebrews were weary and terrified; yet if they had held back when Moses bade them advance, if they had refused to move nearer to the Red Sea, God would never have opened the path for them. In marching down to the very water, they showed that they had faith in the word of God as spoken by Moses. They did all that it was in their power to do, and then the Mighty One of Israel performed His part, and divided the waters to make a path for their feet.

“The clouds that gather about our way will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. . . . It is only through faith that we can reach heaven.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 26, 27.

5. DELIVERANCE TO THE FAITHFUL OBEDIENT

- a. What should we learn from the real purpose for which God so graciously led and protected His heritage through that wilderness journey? Psalm 105:43–45.

“There is great similarity between our history and that of the children of Israel. God led His people from Egypt into the wilderness, where they could keep His law and obey His voice. The Egyptians, who had no regard for the Lord, were encamped close by them; yet what was to the Israelites a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp, and shedding brightness upon the path before them, was to the hosts of Pharaoh a wall of clouds, making blacker the darkness of night.

“So, at this time, there is a people whom God has made the depositaries of His law. To those who obey them, the commandments of God are as a pillar of fire, lighting and leading the way to eternal salvation. But unto those who disregard them, they are as the clouds of night.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 27.

- b. How is our experience to reflect the experience of Moses? Micah 6:3, 4; Revelation 15:2, 3.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In guiding the young, what can I learn from the focus of Jochebed, Moses' mother?
2. How might God be leading me to learn what Moses did during his period of solitude in the desert?
3. How can I cultivate the discernment to distinguish between true and false miracles?
4. In what areas of my life may God be saying right now, “Go forward by faith”?
5. Why do the 144,000 sing the song of Moses and the Lamb?

The Conquest of Jericho

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days” (Hebrews 11:30).

“God works mightily for a faithful people who obey His word without questioning or doubt. The Majesty of heaven, with His army of angels, leveled the walls of Jericho without human aid.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 164.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 487–493.
Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 156–164.

Sunday

May 9

1. WILL WE BETRAY OR PROTECT?

- a. **What will be seen more and more as the present truth which leads to salvation becomes increasingly unpopular? 1 John 2:18, 19.**

“Whenever persecution takes place, the spectators make decisions either for or against Christ. Because of persecution, many will be offended. The principles of the truth cut directly across their practice, and they will stumble and fall, apostatizing from the faith they once advocated. Many who have professed to love the truth will then show that they have no vital union with the True Vine. They will be cut away, as branches that bear no fruit, and will be bound up with unbelievers, scoffers, and mockers.

“Those who apostatize in time of trial will bear false witness and betray their brethren, to secure their own safety. They will tell where their brethren are concealed, putting the wolves on their track. Christ has warned us of this, that we may not be surprised at the cruel, unnatural course pursued by friends and relatives.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 20, 1898.

- b. **Instead of betraying the faithful to condemnation and death, what woman in the Bible stood firm to protect the endangered worshippers of Jehovah? Joshua 2:1–7.**

Monday

May 10

2. GOING FORWARD BY FAITH

- a. **How did Rahab express her faith in the God of Israel, and how were the spies encouraged by this? Joshua 2:8–24.**

- b. **What were the people to keep their eyes on, and why? Joshua 3:1–3.**

“The priests obeyed the commands of their leader and went before the people, carrying the ark of the covenant. The Hebrew hosts took up the line of march and followed this symbol of the divine presence.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 157.

- c. **Describe the miracle that was to inspire the faith of the people. Joshua 3:11–17. What can we learn from this miracle and the way it can apply to us today?**

“In the upbuilding of His work the Lord does not always make everything plain before His servants. He sometimes tries the confidence of His people by bringing about circumstances which compel them to move forward in faith. Often He brings them into strait and trying places, and bids them advance when their feet seem to be touching the waters of Jordan. It is at such times, when the prayers of His servants ascend to Him in earnest faith, that God opens the way before them and brings them out into a large place.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 357.

- d. **Why could Joshua face the battle of Jericho with full assurance of faith? Joshua 5:13–15.**

“The city of Jericho was devoted to the most extravagant idolatry. The inhabitants were very wealthy, but all the riches that God had given them they counted as the gift of their gods. They had gold and silver in abundance; but, like the people before the Flood, they were corrupt and blasphemous, and insulted and provoked the God of heaven by their wicked works. God’s judgments were awakened against Jericho. It was a stronghold. But the Captain of the Lord’s host Himself came from heaven to lead the armies of heaven in an attack upon the city.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 264.

3. ANGELS OPEN THE WAY

- a. Describe the Lord's method given for the toppling of Jericho. Joshua 6:12–17. How can we be inspired by this?

“The vast army [of Israel] marched solemnly around the devoted walls. All was silent, save the measured tread of many feet, and the occasional sound of the trumpet, breaking the stillness of the early morning. The massive walls of solid stone seemed to defy the siege of men. The watchers on the walls looked on with rising fear, as, the first circuit ended, there followed a second, then a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth. What could be the object of these mysterious movements? What mighty event was impending? They had not long to wait. As the seventh circuit was completed, the long procession paused. The trumpets, which for an interval had been silent, now broke forth in a blast that shook the very earth. The walls of solid stone, with their massive towers and battlements, tottered and heaved from their foundations, and with a crash fell in ruin to the earth. The inhabitants of Jericho were paralyzed with terror, and the hosts of Israel marched in and took possession of the city.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 491.

“The Captain of the Lord's host communicated only with Joshua; He did not reveal Himself to all the congregation, and it rested with them to believe or doubt the words of Joshua, to obey the commands given by him in the name of the Lord, or to deny his authority. They could not see the host of angels who attended them under the leadership of the Son of God. They might have reasoned: ‘What unmeaning movements are these, and how ridiculous the performance of marching daily around the walls of the city, blowing trumpets of rams' horns. This can have no effect upon those towering fortifications.’ But the very plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls afforded opportunity for the development of faith among the Israelites. It was to be impressed upon their minds that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to relying wholly upon their divine Leader.

“God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 493 (author's italics).

4. IDOLATRY DEFEATED AND DESTROYED

- a. In what sense was this battle such an utter demonstration of faith? Hebrews 11:30. What are we to learn from it?

“As a people we lack faith. In these days few would follow the directions given through God's chosen servant as obediently as did the armies of Israel at the taking of Jericho. . . .

“Would those who today profess to be God's people conduct themselves thus under similar circumstances? Doubtless many would wish to follow out their own plans and would suggest other ways and means of accomplishing the desired end. They would be loath to submit to so simple an arrangement and one that reflected upon themselves no glory save the merit of obedience. They would also question the possibility of a mighty city being conquered in that manner. But the law of duty is supreme. It should hold sway over human reason. Faith is the living power that presses through every barrier, overrides all obstacles, and plants its banner in the heart of the enemy's camp.

“God will do marvelous things for those who trust in Him. It is because His professed people trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf, that they have no more strength. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and implicitly obey Him. . . .

“Let the people give up self and the desire to work after their own plans, let them humbly submit to the divine will, and God will revive their strength and bring freedom and victory to His children.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 162–164.

- b. What specific directions were given for the procedure once the city was entered? Joshua 6:18–21, 24, 26. What parallel is soon to occur in time of the end? Revelation 18:1, 2, 7–18, 23.

“God was very particular in regard to Jericho, lest the people should be charmed with the things that the inhabitants had worshiped and their hearts be diverted from God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 264.

“The city itself was burned; its palaces and temples, its magnificent dwellings with all their luxurious appointments, the rich draperies and the costly garments, were given to the flames.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 492.

5. RAHAB

- a. How was Rahab cared for? Joshua 6:22, 23, 25.

“All the inhabitants of the city, with every living thing that it contained, ‘both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass,’ were put to the sword. Only faithful Rahab, with her household, was spared, in fulfillment of the promise of the spies.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 491.

- b. What are we to learn from the history of Rahab? Hebrews 11:31; James 2:24, 25.
- c. Rahab can be viewed as a symbol of souls who come from wicked circumstances, yet choose to depart from evil to follow the pathway to Heaven. In the Judgment, how does God take into account all the factors of our life? Psalm 87:4-6; Luke 12:48.

“No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple courts, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan’s influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 369, 370.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did God reward the faith of Rahab?
2. How can I better cooperate with the plans of a God whose angels topple obstacles?
3. What distinguishes the conquest of Jericho among the battles of Israelite history?
4. What things in my life may be in need of destruction, just as the idols of Jericho?
5. In my sphere of influence, how can I best serve those who may be sincere Rahabs?

Instruments of God’s Deliverance

“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae” (Hebrews 11:32).

“By the repeated manifestations of His power in behalf of Israel, God would lead them to have faith in Him—with confidence to seek His help in every emergency. He is just as willing to work with the efforts of His people now and to accomplish great things through weak instrumentalities.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 554.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 543–568.
Gospel Workers (1892), pp. 297–299,
309–319.

1. ADDRESSING AN EMERGENCY

- a. Describe one predicament in which the Israelites found themselves during the time of the judges. Judges 6:1–6.
- b. How did the Lord in His great mercy plan to remedy their situation? Judges 6:11–16.
- c. What was the first step Gideon took at the peril of his life? Judges 6:22–32.

“The deliverance of Israel was to be preceded by a solemn protest against the worship of Baal. Gideon must declare war upon idolatry before going out to battle with the enemies of his people.

“The divine direction was faithfully carried out. Knowing that he would be opposed if it were attempted openly, Gideon performed the work in secret; with the aid of his servants, accomplishing the whole in one night. Great was the rage of the men of Ophrah when they came next morning to pay their devotions to Baal. They would have taken Gideon’s life had not Joash—who had been told of the Angel’s visit—stood in defense of his son.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 547.

2. THE HUMBLE ENCOURAGED

- a. What shows the deep humility of Gideon as God's servant, and how will we likewise be blessed by reflecting such an attitude? Judges 6:17–23, 36–40; Proverbs 15:33.

“The Lord can work most effectually through those who are most sensible of their own insufficiency, and who will rely upon Him as their leader and source of strength. He will make them strong by uniting their weakness to His might, and wise by connecting their ignorance with His wisdom.

“If they would cherish true humility, the Lord could do much more for His people; but there are few who can be trusted with any large measure of responsibility or success without becoming self-confident and forgetful of their dependence upon God. This is why, in choosing the instruments for His work, the Lord passes by those whom the world honors as great, talented, and brilliant. They are too often proud and self-sufficient. They feel competent to act without counsel from God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 553, 554.

“When we realize what is involved in our service to Christ, we are driven to the throne of grace to ask the Lord for the very things we need. He whose eyes are anointed with spiritual discernment feels that it means something to be a worker together with God. He will realize that it is perilous to trust in self; for self-confidence is vain. It is only when we accept solemn responsibility, relying upon God and distrusting self, that we can become efficient workers in His cause. To be clothed with humility does not mean that we are to be dwarfs in intellect, deficient in our aspirations, and cowardly in our lives, shunning all burdens for fear we shall not carry them successfully. In the strength of Christ we are to take up our responsibilities, bearing them for His sake, and ever going to Him for rest.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 15, 1892.

- b. What added encouragement did God give to boost Gideon's faith? Judges 7:9–15.

“The apparently powerless condition of that little company of Israelites, compared with the vast host of the enemy, was fitly represented by the cake of barley bread. But as that loaf overthrew the tent upon which it fell, so would the handful of Israelites destroy their numerous and powerful enemies.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 14, 1881.

3. AMAZING METHODS

- a. What are we to learn from the way Gideon was to select his army? Judges 7:1–8.

“There is a lesson to be learned from Gideon's army. It was not because of their great numbers that they prevailed, but because they were willing to follow the special directions of God by living faith. Those that were soon to press on to the battle, and who would scoop up the water and drink as they went, were the ones whom God accepted to engage in this enterprise; but those who prepared to have a good time, and bowed down leisurely and drank, were sent back to their homes.

“The Lord God of Israel looks upon us individually, and He sees whether we are in earnest in this matter. He sees whether we carry the burden of souls upon our hearts. He sees whether or not we touch these living interests with the tip ends of our fingers. If we have the interest that Knox had when he pleaded before God for Scotland, we shall have success. He cried, ‘Give me Scotland, Lord, or I die.’ And when we take hold of the work and wrestle with God, saying, ‘I must have souls; I will never give up the struggle,’ we will find that God will look upon our efforts with favor. He sees that if He gives you souls as the result of your ministry, it will not make you proud or lifted up. You will not be in a position where you will feel for an instant that someone else will get the credit for these souls; but you will feel so grateful to God that they are saved, that His praise will be in your hearts and on your lips day and night. It is such men that God will make mighty instruments to do His work.”—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, p. 45.

- b. What was the main way that God miraculously gave this victory? Judges 7:16–22.

“The light of three hundred lamps, piercing the midnight darkness, and that mighty shout from three hundred voices, suddenly aroused the sleeping army. Believing themselves at the mercy of an overwhelming force, the Midianites were panic-stricken. A terrible scene of confusion ensued. In their fright they fled in all directions, and mistaking their own companions for enemies they slew one another.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 14, 1881.

4. THE EXPERIENCE OF BARAK

- a. Describe another time when Israel was in trouble. Judges 4:1–3. What was to be the solution? Judges 4:4–9.

“Barak knew the scattered, disheartened, and unarmed condition of the Hebrews, and the strength and skill of their enemies. Although he had been designated by the Lord Himself as the one chosen to deliver Israel, and had received the assurance that God would go with him and subdue their enemies, yet he was timid and distrustful. He accepted the message from Deborah as the word of God, but he had little confidence in Israel, and feared that they would not obey his call. He refused to engage in such a doubtful undertaking unless Deborah would accompany him, and thus support his efforts by her influence and counsel. Deborah consented, but assured him that because of his lack of faith, the victory gained should not bring honor to him; for Sisera would be betrayed into the hands of a woman.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1881.

- b. How was Deborah’s prophecy of victory gained, and why? Judges 4:10–22; 5:1, 2.

“The Israelites were but poorly prepared for an encounter, and looked with terror upon the vast armies spread out in the plain beneath them, equipped with all the implements of warfare, and provided with the dreaded chariots of iron. These were so constructed as to be terribly destructive. Large, scythe-like knives were fastened to the axles, so that the chariots, being driven through the ranks of the enemy, would cut them down like wheat before the sickle.

“The Israelites had established themselves in a strong position in the mountains, to await a favorable opportunity for an attack. Encouraged by Deborah’s assurance that the very day had come for signal victory, Barak led his army down into the open plain, and boldly made a charge upon the enemy. The God of battle fought for Israel, and neither skill in warfare, nor superiority of numbers and equipment, could withstand them. The hosts of Sisera were panic-stricken; in their terror they sought only how they might escape. Vast numbers were slain, and the strength of the invading army was utterly destroyed. The Israelites acted with courage and promptness; but God alone could have discomfited the enemy, and the victory could be ascribed to Him alone.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1881.

5. SAMSON AND JEPHTHAH

- a. Though Samson’s life shows little sign that he ever appreciated God’s calling, what evidence shows that he finally repented? Judges 16:21–31.

“In suffering and humiliation, a sport for the Philistines, Samson learned more of his own weakness than he had ever known before; and his afflictions led him to repentance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 566.

- b. Describe the chronic problem of Israel, and how God felt about it. Judges 10:6–16. What should we realize when tempted by the same problem today? 1 John 3:13.

- c. What was Jephthah’s background, and what was he called to do? Judges 11:1–11. What reveals his sense of reverence and trust in God? Judges 11:14, 27–32.

- d. How did Jephthah show his integrity and deep understanding of the solemnity of speaking before God? Judges 11:33–40; Psalm 15:1, 4 (last part); Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does the life of Gideon demonstrate the link between humility and victory?
2. In what aspects of life can the lessons from Gideon’s military strategy apply today?
3. What action is needed in order for us to become more successful soul winners?
4. Why did God choose to deliver Israel at the hand of a woman in the time of Barak?
5. In what ways do the experiences of Samson and Jephthah offer us hope?

Leadership by Faith

“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of . . . David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets” (Hebrews 11:32).

“It is hardly possible for men to offer a greater insult to God than to despise and reject the instrumentalities that He has appointed to lead them.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 355.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 569–574, 592–602.
Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 176–185.

Sunday

May 23

1. A BELOVED PROPHET AND JUDGE

- a. **What is written of Samuel even before he was conceived in his mother’s womb, and how did he respond to God’s call as a child? 1 Samuel 1:20; 2:18; 3:10.**

“Though Samuel’s youth was passed at the tabernacle devoted to the worship of God, he was not free from evil influences or sinful example. The sons of Eli feared not God, nor honored their father; but Samuel did not seek their company nor follow their evil ways. It was his constant endeavor to become what God would have him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 573.

- b. **What are some ways in which Samuel was a blessing to Israel? 1 Samuel 7:8–13.**

“Samuel, by the Lord’s direction, established the schools of the prophets. These schools were intended to serve as a barrier against the wide-spreading corruption, to provide for the mental and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counselors. To this end, Samuel gathered companies of young men who were pious, intelligent, and studious.”—*Education*, p. 46.

Monday

May 24

2. THE NEW MONARCHY

- a. **What request of the Israelites grieved Samuel, and why? 1 Samuel 8:4–7, 18–22.**
- b. **What did Samuel declare to the people about their new king, and how did the Lord demonstrate His support for the words of His servant? 1 Samuel 12:13–25.**
- c. **What reveals the depth of Samuel’s love for God’s heritage? 1 Samuel 15:10, 11.**
- d. **What had been the key to Saul’s remaining in power? 1 Samuel 15:17. Why was his reign called to a halt? 1 Samuel 15:18–23, 28; Psalm 75:5–7.**

“If Saul had shown a regard for the requirements of God in this time of trial, God could have worked His will through him. His failure now proved him unfit to be the vicegerent of God to His people. He would mislead Israel. His will, rather than the will of God, would be the controlling power. If Saul had been faithful, his kingdom would have been established forever; but since he had failed, the purpose of God must be accomplished by another. The government of Israel must be committed to one who would rule the people according to the will of Heaven.

“We do not know what great interests may be at stake in the proving of God. There is no safety except in strict obedience to the word of God. All His promises are made upon condition of faith and obedience, and a failure to comply with His commands cuts off the fulfillment to us of the rich provisions of the Scriptures. We should not follow impulse, nor rely on the judgment of men; we should look to the revealed will of God and walk according to His definite commandment, no matter what circumstances may surround us. God will take care of the results; by faithfulness to His word we may in time of trial prove before men and angels that the Lord can trust us in difficult places to carry out His will, honor His name, and bless His people.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 621, 622.

- e. **What was Samuel soon to understand about God’s abundant mercy toward the erring nation longing for a king? 1 Samuel 16:1, 6, 7, 10–13.**

3. LEADING IN THE FEAR OF GOD

- a. How did Samuel describe the only type of king that God could endorse and bless? 1 Samuel 13:13, 14.

“Saul had been after the heart of Israel, but David is a man after God’s own heart.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 15, 1888.

- b. What are some of the various ways in which Hebrews 11:33, 34 can apply to the faith of David? 1 Samuel 17:34, 35; 19:8, 10, 18; Psalm 144:1.

“On one occasion, as the evening shadows gathered, and [David] laid aside his harp, he saw a dark form moving stealthily upon his flock. It was a bear, fierce with hunger, that sprang upon the sheep of his care; but David did not flee for his life. He felt that it was the very hour when his charges needed his protection. He lifted his heart to God in prayer for wisdom and help, that he might do his duty in this time of peril. With his strong arm he laid the bear in death at his feet. At another time he discovered a lion with a bleeding lamb between his jaws. Without hesitation the youthful shepherd engaged in a desperate encounter. His arm, nerved by the living God, forced the beast to release its bleeding victim, and as it turned, mad with disappointment, upon David, he buried his hand in its mane and killed the fierce invader. His experience in these matters proved the heart of David, and developed in him courage, and fortitude, and faith. God was teaching David lessons of trust. As Moses was trained for his work, so the Lord was fitting the son of Jesse to become the leader and guide of his chosen people. In his watchcare for his flocks, he was gaining an appreciation of the care that the great Shepherd has for the sheep of His pasture.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 3, 1888.

- c. What was David eventually to instruct the heir to his throne about true leadership? 1 Kings 2:1–4.

4. DAVID’S ATTITUDE

- a. Many are familiar with the serious sins and mistakes of David. Why then can he still be considered such an example of faith and leadership? Psalms 32:1–7; 51:1–4, 9–11.

“It was when David was pure, and walking in the counsel of God, that God called him a man after His own heart. When David departed from God, and stained his virtuous character by his crimes, he was no longer a man after God’s own heart. God did not in the least degree justify him in his sins, but sent Nathan his prophet, with dreadful denunciations to David because he had transgressed the commandment of the Lord. God shows his displeasure at David’s having a plurality of wives by visiting him with judgments, and permitting evils to rise up against him from his own house. The terrible calamity God permitted to come upon David, who for his integrity was once called a man after God’s own heart, is evidence to after generations that God would not justify any one in transgressing his commandments, but that He will surely punish the guilty, however righteous, and favored of God they might once have been while they followed the Lord in purity of heart. When the righteous turn from their righteousness and do evil, their past righteousness will not save them from the wrath of a just and holy God.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4a, p. 87.

- b. What can we learn from how David responded when reproved? 2 Samuel 12:7–13. How did he view sin’s consequences? 2 Samuel 15:30, 32 (first part); Proverbs 6:23.

“Never was David dearer to the heart of Infinite Love than when, conscience-smitten, he fled for his life from his enemies, who had been stirred to rebellion by his own son. The Lord says, ‘As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent’ (Revelation 3:19). Christ lifts up the contrite heart and refines the mourning soul until it becomes His abode.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 11.

- c. What reveals David’s humble acceptance of God’s will, even at times when his hopes may have been disappointed? 1 Chronicles 28:2, 3.

5. THE FAITH OF THE PROPHETS

a. What comes to mind when considering the trials of God's prophets? James 5:10.

b. How does Hebrews 11:33 apply to Daniel under king Darius? Daniel 6:20-22.

"Daniel would allow no earthly power to come in between him and his God, even with the prospect of death in the den of lions. Although God did not prevent Daniel from being cast into a den of lions, an angel went in with him and closed their mouths, so that no harm befell him."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 527.

c. How does Hebrews 11:36 apply to Jeremiah under king Zedekiah? Jeremiah 38:6.

"Jeremiah could not be deterred from speaking the words that God had given him to speak; and his testimony so enraged the king and princes that he was cast into a loathsome pit."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 575.

d. How does Hebrews 11:37 apply to Isaiah under king Manasseh? 2 Kings 21:16.

"Isaiah, who was permitted by the Lord to see wonderful things, was sawn asunder, because he faithfully reprov'd the sins of the Jewish nation."—*The Signs of the Times*, February 17, 1898.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why was Samuel so beloved?
2. Why was God loathe to give Israel a king, and why does He have no monarchy now?
3. What made David a better king than Saul?
4. Why can each one of us be encouraged by the way God dealt with David?
5. In following the steps of holy men of old, why will my life never be glamorous?

First Sabbath Offering

Chapel in Seoul, South Korea



The development of the Reform Movement in South Korea has been a wonderful blessing. From its inception believers in South Korea have been active missionaries, spreading the gospel throughout the country.

More recently missionaries from South Korea have opened local mission-work-projects in a number of Asian countries. Frequent visits are made to these countries from South Korea to continue developing new missions in these countries.

As we are told, when we develop the mission work abroad we see blessings at home as well. The work of salvation has brought precious souls to the message in South Korea, especially in the capital city of Seoul. As a result a new chapel needs to be constructed in this large metropolitan city to accommodate the many interested persons attracted to the message of spiritual Reformation.

As South Korea has helped to develop the work abroad, we now appeal to our brethren and sisters everywhere to remember us on June 5. Please give generously to assist the completion of this church building.

Your brethren and sisters from South Korea

"God in His wise plans has made the advancement of His cause dependent upon the personal efforts of His people and upon their freewill offerings. By accepting the cooperation of man in the great plan of redemption, He has placed a signal honor upon him. The minister cannot preach, except he be sent. The work of dispensing light does not rest upon ministers alone. Every person, upon becoming a member of the church, pledges himself to be a representative of Christ by living out the truth he professes. The followers of Christ should carry forward the work which He left for them to do when He ascended into heaven."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 464.

Paul

“I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:8, 9).

“A more hearty, persevering, energetic disciple of Jesus Christ than was Paul, has never been upon the earth.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 11, 1888.

Suggested Readings: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 123–130.
Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 371–380.

Sunday

May 30

1. A REMARKABLE CONVERSION

- a. Although Paul does not include his own name in the list of heroes of faith, what was the background of this author of the book of Hebrews? Philippians 3:4–6.

“Paul had faith before his conversion; but it was not a correct faith. His self-righteousness strengthened his faith that he was doing God’s service in rejecting Christ, and he enjoyed a restful satisfaction. False faith as well as true faith will give peacefulness for a time. Paul verily thought that he was doing God’s service when he was persecuting the followers of Christ and putting them to death. He was sincere in his belief; but sincerity will not make error truth, nor truth error.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 5, 1886.

- b. What comfort comes to all who surrender to Jesus, as Paul did? Acts 9:1–6, 17, 18.

“You also may have done wrong, thinking you were perfectly right; but when time reveals your error, then it is your duty to humble the heart, and confess your sin. Fall on the Rock and be broken; then Jesus can give you a new heart, a new spirit.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 16, 1890.

Monday

May 31

2. A NEW FOCUS

- a. What was Paul’s first step immediately after his baptism? Galatians 1:15–19.

“Paul’s life was in peril, and he received a commission from God to leave Damascus for a time. He went into Arabia; and there, in comparative solitude, he had ample opportunity for communion with God, and for contemplation. He wished to be alone with God, to search his own heart, to deepen his repentance, and to prepare himself by prayer and study to engage in a work which appeared to him too great and too important for him to undertake. He was an apostle, not chosen of men, but chosen of God, and his work was plainly stated to be among the Gentiles.

“While in Arabia he did not communicate with the apostles; he sought God earnestly with all his heart, determining not to rest till he knew for a certainty that his repentance was accepted, and his great sin pardoned. He would not give up the conflict until he had the assurance that Jesus would be with him in his coming ministry. He was ever to carry about with him in the body the marks of Christ’s glory, in his eyes, which had been blinded by the heavenly light, and he desired also to bear with him constantly the assurance of Christ’s sustaining grace. Paul came in close connection with Heaven, and Jesus communed with him.”—*Sketches From the Life of Paul*, pp. 33, 34.

- b. What was Paul later to declare about the residual problem with his eyes? 2 Corinthians 12:7–10.

- c. How can we be inspired by Paul’s choice? Philippians 3:7–11; Jeremiah 9:23, 24.

“Paul suffered much. He was persecuted from city to city, in perils oft, in prison, in scourging, in bonds, in fastings, in weariness and painful watchings, but he looked beyond the sufferings of the present time to glory beyond, and said: ‘I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us’ (Romans 8:18). This is what God would have His people do. He would have us reckon and consider the rich reward of the eternal world, that we may appreciate the privileges that are brought within our reach through the plan of salvation.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 18, 1889.

3. THE NOBLEST AIM

- a. How can we summarize Paul's aim? **1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Philippians 3:12-14.**

“[Paul] had one aim before him, and that was, that from his lips should go forth the tidings of redemption to perishing souls, that they might be brought into acquaintance with the Redeemer of the world. His whole soul was wrapped up in Jesus, and in the light of truth received from the Source of all light. This light must be carefully cherished.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 11, 1888.

“In all the busy activities of his life, Paul never lost sight of one great purpose—to press toward the prize of his high calling. One aim he kept steadfastly before him—to be faithful to the One who at the gate of Damascus had revealed Himself to him. From this aim nothing had power to turn him aside. To exalt the cross of Calvary—this was the all-absorbing motive that inspired his words and acts.

“The great purpose that constrained Paul to press forward in the face of hardship and difficulty should lead every Christian worker to consecrate himself wholly to God's service. Worldly attractions will be presented to draw his attentions from the Saviour, but he is to press on toward the goal, showing to the world, to angels, and to men that the hope of seeing the face of God is worth all the effort and sacrifice that the attainment of this hope demands.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 483, 484.

- b. What should we consider in view of the shortness of time before us? **Luke 12:27-37.**

“Paul counted all things but loss that he might win Christ. But when the Saviour calls for our possessions and our service, there are many who see they cannot obey God and carry their earthly treasures with them, and they decide to stay by their treasures. Jesus left all His glory, and became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. But how few of His professed followers appreciate His great sacrifice! How few are willing to follow His example! How can those who expect to stand around Christ's throne, and to be clothed with his righteousness, distrust God, and fear that He will leave them to come to want? Where is their faith? Our heavenly Father feeds the ravens, and will He not much more feed us?”—*The Review and Herald*, March 15, 1887.

4. THE LIFE OF PAUL

- a. What kind of life did the apostle Paul lead? **2 Corinthians 11:9.**

“Among the believers in Christ there was no one apostle who was exalted as was Paul by the revelation of the Saviour in his conversion. And Paul labored with his hands as a tentmaker. In the midst of his zeal in persecuting the Christians, Paul had been arrested by a voice and a great light from heaven. During his ministerial labors he had several visions, of which he spoke little. He saw and heard many things not lawful for a man to utter. That which was given him as a special revelation from God was not at all times dwelt upon when he spoke to the people. But the impression was ever with him, enabling him to give a correct representation of the Christian life and character. The impression made upon his mind by the revelation of Christ never lost its force. It influenced his estimation and delineation of Christian character.

“The history of the apostle Paul is a constant testimony that manual labor cannot be degrading, that it is not inconsistent with true elevation of character. Paul worked day and night to avoid being a burden to his brethren, and at times he supported his fellow workers, he himself suffering from hunger in order to relieve the necessities of others. His toil-worn hands, as he presented them before the people, bore testimony that he was not chargeable to any man for his support. They detracted nothing, he deemed, from the force of his pathetic appeals, sensible, intelligent, and eloquent beyond those of any other man who had acted a part in the Christian ministry.—*The Youth's Instructor*, January 31, 1901.

- b. What does Paul teach us about true Christian ministry? **2 Corinthians 11:22-28.**

“We need men in these last days who are ever awake. Minutemen are wanted who are sincere in their love for the truth and willing to labor at a sacrifice if they can advance the cause of God and save precious souls. Men are wanted in this work who will not murmur or complain at hardships or trials, knowing that this is a part of the legacy that Jesus has left them. They should be willing to go without the camp and suffer reproach and bear burdens as good soldiers of Christ. They will bear the cross of Christ without complaint, without murmuring or fretfulness, and will be patient in tribulation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 423.

5. WHOLEHEARTED CONSECRATION

- a. Why should we be inspired by Paul's level of consecration? **Philippians 4:11-13.**

“Let the great purpose that constrained Paul to press forward in the face of hardship and difficulty lead you to consecrate yourselves wholly to God's service.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 29, 1910.

- b. Foreseeing his soon martyrdom, what did Paul declare? **2 Timothy 1:11-13; 4:6-8.**

“The apostle [Paul] had carefully guarded himself, that he should not betray any murmuring, or make any appeal to his own sympathies. But, for the benefit of those who should follow Christ, he was determined to leave an example worthy of imitation. . . . He desired that Timothy should heartily believe, and carefully meditate upon the sufferings, the crucifixion, and the resurrection, of Christ, and find in the mission of Jesus sufficient support under all trials in the Christian life, that he might be able to endure all for Christ's sake. For if the Master of the house had to suffer trial and persecution, shall not they of his household? Is the servant above his Lord?”—*The Review and Herald*, September 11, 1888.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Whom do I know that may yet be changed as Paul was on the road to Damascus?
2. In seeking to be a soul winner, have I yet undergone the “Arabia retreat” of which Paul recognized the need?
3. What things may be now distracting me from the noblest aim I should have?
4. Why should I be thankful for manual labor, even if I would prefer to do something else?
5. In what aspects of my life do I need greater dedication to God's service?

Biblical Faith

“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

“Hold the faith with a firm hand, but be sure that you hold it in righteousness.”—*The Signs of the Times*, December 13, 1899.

Suggested Readings: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 67-75.
Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 303-310.

1. LAMBS OF GOD

- a. What should we all realize who accept Christ as our Saviour? **Hebrews 12:1-3.**

“Oh, how often we yield to temptation because we do not keep our eye upon Jesus! Our faith is not continuous because, through self-indulgence, we sin, and then we cannot endure ‘as seeing Him who is invisible’ (Hebrews 11:27).”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 652.

“Worldly attractions will be presented to draw your attention from the Lord Jesus; but laying aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets, press on toward the heavenly goal, showing to the world, to angels, and to men that the hope of seeing the face of God is worth all the effort and the sacrifice that the attainment of the hope demands.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 29, 1910.

- b. How can we grow in our Christian walk? **1 Peter 2:1-3.**

- c. What other means does God use to help us grow in Christ? **Hebrews 12:4-12.**

“The Lord permits trials to come upon us in order that we may make earnest, heartfelt intercession. Trial brings us to God, and leads us to form a closer connection with Christ our Saviour. Trial forces us to do as the word of God directs.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 20, 1896.

2. WHEN TRIALS COME

- a. **What are we to realize when faced with difficulties? James 1:2-4; Psalm 84:11.**

“The Word does not say that we are to count it all joy when we fall under temptation, but when we fall into temptation. It is not necessary to fall under temptation, for temptation comes upon us for the trying of our faith. And the trying of our faith worketh patience, not fretfulness and murmuring. If we put our trust in Jesus, He will keep us at all times, and will be our strength and shield. We are to learn valuable lessons from our trials. . . .

“Many become the sport of the enemy, because when temptations comes, they do not rest in Jesus, but worry themselves out of His arms, and in perplexity lose all their faith and courage. They do not remember that Jesus has helped them out of difficulties in the past, that His grace is sufficient for the daily trials, and that He can help in the present trouble. We make failures in our little, daily difficulties, and allow them to irritate and vex us; we fall under them, and so make stumbling blocks for ourselves and others. But blessings of the greatest importance are to result from the patient endurance of these daily vexations; for we are to gain strength to bear greater difficulties. Satan will press upon us the most severe temptations, and we must learn to come to God in any and every emergency, as a child would come to its parents.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 19, 1891.

- b. **What assurances does God offer as we exercise faith in Him? Ephesians 6:14-16.**

“We are not to be like the man who said, ‘I have prayed and prayed, but I do not receive.’ A companion said to him, ‘Let us pray together then, and claim the promise of God.’ So they bowed in prayer; but when they rose from their knees, the man said, ‘I don’t feel any different, and I didn’t expect I should.’ This is the way that many present themselves before God; they would be surprised if God should answer their prayers. They do not expect the Lord to answer their prayers, or think that the Lord will hear them, and their petitions are in vain; for they go away as they came.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 19, 1891.

3. ABIDING IN CHRIST

- a. **How does Christ depict His relationship with His children? John 15:1-5; 1 John 3:3.**

“[John 15:5, 4 quoted.] In this vine is all spiritual life. From Christ’s fullness alone can we obtain nourishment unto eternal life. The vine stock is unseen; but the branches—members of His body—are visible. The scion which before was leafless and apparently lifeless, becomes, when grafted into the vine, a partaker of its life and fatness. Fiber by fiber, and vein by vein, the graft adheres to the parent stock, till the life-giving sap flows to the adopted member, causing it to bud, and blossom, and bear fruit.

“The scion becomes a part of the living vine by forming a perfect union with it. Thus it is with the sinner. By repentance and faith, he becomes connected with Jesus Christ, and lives in him. This connection joins soul to soul—the finite with the infinite. But, contrary to nature, the branch which has been united with the true vine brings forth, not fruit of its own kind, but the fruit of the vine of which it has become a part. The Spirit of Christ, flowing into the hearts of all who are indeed united with Him, makes them partakers of the divine nature. They become pure, even as He is pure.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 20, 1881.

“The life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Saviour, pervades the soul, renews the motives and affections, and brings even the thoughts into obedience to the will of God, enabling the receiver to bear the precious fruit of holy deeds. . . .

“If the follower of Christ would grow up ‘unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ’ (Ephesians 4:13), he must eat of the bread of life and drink of the water of salvation. He must watch and pray and work, in all things giving heed to the instructions of God in His word.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 284, 285.

- b. **What is one of the wonderful results of abiding in Christ? 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.**

“Christ is represented by the vine that imparts the nourishment, the vitality, the life, the spirit, the power, that the branch can bear fruit, and then when affliction and disappointment come, you are to show altogether a different character of fruit than the world. There is the evidence that you are connected with Jesus Christ, and that there is a power that sustains you in all your afflictions and disappointments and trials; and this power and this grace sweetens every affliction.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 355.

4. THE FRUITS OF FAITH

- a. **What are we to add to our faith, and what fruit will be shown?** 2 Peter 1:3–9; Galatians 5:22, 23.

“The soul that loves God, rises above the fog of doubt; he gains a bright, broad, deep, living experience, and becomes meek and Christlike. His soul is committed to God, hid with Christ in God. He will be able to stand the test of neglect, of abuse and contempt, because his Saviour has suffered all this. He will not become fretful and discouraged when difficulties press him, because Jesus did not fail or become discouraged. Every true Christian will be strong, not in the strength and merit of his good works, but in the righteousness of Christ, which through faith is imputed unto him. It is a great thing to be meek and lowly in heart, to be pure and undefiled, as was the Prince of heaven when He walked among men.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 3, 1889.

- b. **If our character is not becoming Christlike as it should be, what is the basic problem?** 2 Peter 1:10, 11; Hebrews 3:12. **If we find ourselves in this predicament, what should be the cry of our heart?** Mark 9:24.

“When the tempests of temptation gather, and the fierce lightnings flash, and the waves sweep over us, we battle with the storm alone, forgetting that there is One who can help us. We trust to our own strength till our hope is lost, and we are ready to perish. Then we remember Jesus, and if we call upon Him to save us, we shall not cry in vain. Though He sorrowfully reproves our unbelief and self-confidence, He never fails to give us the help we need.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 336.

“It is faith that connects us with heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong. But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Saviour. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when He walked among men is the same mighty Redeemer today. Faith comes by the word of God. Then grasp His promise, ‘Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out’ (John 6:37). Cast yourself at His feet with the cry, ‘Lord, I believe; help *Thou* mine unbelief.’ You can never perish while you do this—never.”—*Ibid.*, p. 429 (author’s italics).

5. LIVING BY FAITH

- a. **Why is it that a proud person can never be truly faithful?** Habakkuk 2:4.

“Advancement in Christian experience is characterized by increasing humility, as the result of increasing knowledge. Everyone who is united to Christ will depart from all iniquity. . . . When Christ is cherished in the heart, His likeness will be revealed in the life. Humility will reign where pride was once predominant. Submission, meekness, patience, will soften down the rugged features of a naturally perverse, impetuous disposition. Love to Jesus will be manifested in love to His people. It is not fitful, not spasmodic, but calm and deep and strong. The life of the Christian will be divested of all pretense, free from all affectation, artifice, and falsehood. It is earnest, true, sublime. Christ speaks in every word. He is seen in every deed. The life is radiant with the light of an indwelling Saviour. In converse with God and in happy contemplation of heavenly things the soul is preparing for heaven and laboring to gather other souls into the fold of Christ. Our Saviour is able and willing to do for us more than we can ask or even think.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 49, 50.

- b. **How can we follow the Lord even when circumstances point against us?** 2 Corinthians 4:17, 18; 5:7.

“Faith looks beyond the difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen, even Omnipotence, therefore it cannot be baffled. Faith is the clasping of the hand of Christ in every emergency.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 100.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What may be clouding my spiritual eyesight as I seek to look to Jesus?**
2. **How can I improve in my exercise of faith during trials and difficulties?**
3. **How can I promote the life-giving sap to flow more freely from Christ to me?**
4. **The standard of Christian virtue is high—yet, how are we encouraged along the way?**
5. **What occurs in the soul who keeps in close touch with God at the foot of the cross?**

After the Scriptures Were Penned

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

“The Waldenses, John Wycliffe, Huss and Jerome, Martin Luther and Zwingli, Cranmer, Latimer, and Knox, the Huguenots, John and Charles Wesley, and a host of others brought to the foundation material that will endure throughout eternity.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 598.

Suggested Readings: *Early Writings*, pp. 222–226.
Maranatha, pp. 15–17.

Sunday

June 13

1. BIBLE-BELIEVING CHRISTIANS

- a. **What is the main key to victory and genuineness in the Christian life? Matthew 4:4.**

“This word [of God] is the bread of heaven, and those who read and study it, making its truths a part of the life, will be given power from above.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 24, 1904.

- b. **How important is Scripture to the Christian faith? Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.**

“Spiritual life must be sustained by communion with Christ through His Word. The mind must dwell upon it, the heart must be filled with it. The Word of God laid up in the heart and sacredly cherished and obeyed, through the power of the grace of Christ can make man right, and keep him right; but every human influence, every earthly invention, is powerless to give strength and wisdom to man. It cannot restrain passion, or correct deformity of character. Unless the truth of God controls the heart, the conscience will be warped.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 124.

Monday

June 14

2. THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS

- a. **In the early centuries after the Scriptures were penned, what did happen to the true believers in Bible religion, as symbolized by a pure woman? Revelation 12:12–14.**

“The faith which for centuries was held and taught by the Waldensian Christians was in marked contrast to the false doctrines put forth from Rome. Their religious belief was founded upon the written word of God, the true system of Christianity. But those humble peasants, in their obscure retreats, shut away from the world, and bound to daily toil among their flocks and their vineyards, had not by themselves arrived at the truth in opposition to the dogmas and heresies of the apostate church. Theirs was not a faith newly received. Their religious belief was their inheritance from their fathers. They contended for the faith of the apostolic church—‘the faith which was once delivered unto the saints’ (Jude 3). ‘The church in the wilderness,’ and not the proud hierarchy enthroned in the world’s great capital, was the true church of Christ, the guardian of the treasures of truth which God has committed to His people to be given to the world. . . .

“The Waldenses were among the first of the peoples of Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures. Hundreds of years before the Reformation they possessed the Bible in manuscript in their native tongue. They had the truth unadulterated, and this rendered them the special objects of hatred and persecution.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 64, 65.

- b. **What was one of the key doctrines which these persecuted saints upheld? Luke 6:5.**

“Among the leading causes that had led to the separation of the true church from Rome was the hatred of the latter toward the Bible Sabbath. As foretold by prophecy, the papal power cast down the truth to the ground. The law of God was trampled in the dust, while the traditions and customs of men were exalted. The churches that were under the rule of the papacy were early compelled to honor the Sunday as a holy day.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 65.

3. THE GREAT REFORMATION

- a. What precious promises did Christ give to the faithful few living in the era of Thyatira during the Dark Ages? Revelation 2:24–28. How was the prophecy of the “morning star” fulfilled?

“In the fourteenth century arose in England the ‘morning star of the Reformation.’ John Wycliffe was the herald of reform, not for England alone, but for all Christendom. The great protest against Rome which it was permitted him to utter was never to be silenced. That protest opened the struggle which was to result in the emancipation of individuals, of churches, and of nations.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 80.

- b. What beautiful, yet hidden gems of truth were rediscovered by men such as Martin Luther? 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 1:16, 17.

“Notwithstanding all the persecution of the saints, living witnesses for God’s truth were raised up on every hand. Angels of the Lord were doing the work committed to their trust. They were searching in the darkest places and selecting out of the darkness men who were honest in heart. These were all buried up in error, yet God called them, as He did Saul, to be chosen vessels to bear His truth and raise their voices against the sins of His professed people. Angels of God moved upon the hearts of Martin Luther, Melancthon, and others in different places, and caused them to thirst for the living testimony of the Word of God. The enemy had come in like a flood, and the standard must be raised against him. Luther was the one chosen to breast the storm, stand up against the ire of a fallen church, and strengthen the few who were faithful to their holy profession. He was ever fearful of offending God. He tried through works to obtain His favor, but was not satisfied until a gleam of light from heaven drove the darkness from his mind and led him to trust, not in works, but in the merits of the blood of Christ. He could then come to God for himself, not through popes or confessors, but through Jesus Christ alone.

“Oh, how precious to Luther was this new and glorious light which had dawned upon his dark understanding and driven away his superstition! He prized it higher than the richest earthly treasure. The Word of God was new. Everything was changed. The book he had dreaded because he could not see beauty in it, was now life, eternal life, to him. It was his joy, his consolation, his blessed teacher.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 222, 223.

4. THE LAODICEAN ERA

- a. What did William Miller, a meticulous Bible student, begin to realize in the 1830’s?

“[William Miller] was forced to the conclusion, from the study of Scripture alone, that the period allotted for the continuance of the earth in its present state was about to close.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 323.

- b. Explain some of the important prophecies which came to light among the believers in the second advent movement. Daniel 8:14; Revelation 1:7; 14:1–12.

-
- c. Despite the great light entrusted and the urgency of the hour, why has Christ been disappointed in the church of this era? 1 Corinthians 14:8; Revelation 3:14–17.

“We are in danger of giving the third angel’s message in so indefinite a manner that it does not impress the people. So many other interests are brought in that the very message which should be proclaimed with power becomes tame and voiceless.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 60.

- d. Due to the lukewarm state of spirituality, what does Christ warn? Revelation 3:18, 19. Yet with the passing of time, has this problem gotten better—or worse? James 2:10–12.

“Of those who boast of their light and yet fail to walk in it Christ says, ‘But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum [Seventh-day Adventists, who have had great light], which art exalted unto heaven [in point of privilege], shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee’ (Matthew 11:22–24).”—*The Review and Herald*, August 1, 1893. [All explanations in brackets were penned by the author.]

5. A MOVEMENT OF REFORMATION SEPARATED

- a. When the highest level of church-body leadership turns from its original course, to persecute and condemn to imprisonment and death those upholding the very principles on which the body was founded, what does that indicate? **Matthew 23:37–39.**

“By the stoning of Stephen the Jews finally sealed their rejection of the gospel.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 233.

“There are clear, decided distinctions to be restored and exemplified to the world in holding aloft the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. The beauty of holiness is to appear in its native luster in contrast with the deformity and darkness of the disloyal, those who have revolted from the law of God. Thus we acknowledge God and recognize His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and throughout His earthly dominions. His authority should be kept distinct and plain before the world, and no laws are to be acknowledged that come in collision with the laws of Jehovah. If in defiance of God’s arrangements the world be allowed to influence our decisions or our actions, the purpose of God is defeated. However specious the pretext, if the church waver here, there is written against her in the books of heaven a betrayal of the most sacred trusts, and treachery to the kingdom of Christ.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 16, 17.

- b. Why does God endorse a separation in such circumstances? **Psalm 11:3; Jude 3.**

“Satan has laid every measure possible that nothing shall come among us as a people to reprove and rebuke us, and exhort us to put away our errors. But there is a people who will bear the ark of God.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 411.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can I develop a greater appreciation for the Bible as the foundation of faith?
2. Why are we to be inspired by our church forefathers in the wilderness?
3. What made Martin Luther’s experience such a joyous one?
4. Why does God place all church organizations on probation?
5. When God calls forth a reformatory movement, what is its continual duty?

A Call to Higher Ground

“The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (**Proverbs 4:18**).

“This very day the Lord desires us to reach a higher standard than we have ever reached in the past. Day by day we are to advance upward, ever upward, until it can be said of us as a people, ‘Ye are complete in him’ (**Colossians 2:10**).”—*The Upward Look*, p. 202.

Suggested Readings: *Early Writings*, pp. 64–67.
The Ministry of Healing, pp. 503–516.

1. HISTORIC OR PROGRESSIVE?

- a. Is our call today merely to be “historic” Seventh-day Adventists after the pattern of our forefathers—or is it actually to be holier than they were? **Proverbs 4:18; Luke 12:48 (last part).**

“We shall not be approved of God in looking to the example of our fathers to determine our duty instead of searching the word of truth for ourselves. Our responsibility is greater than was that of our ancestors. We are accountable for the light which they received, and which was handed down as an inheritance for us, and we are accountable also for the additional light which is now shining upon us from the word of God.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 164.

- b. Having studied the faith of the patriarchs, prophets, and pioneers this quarter, what should encourage us from what we have read? **Romans 15:4; Hebrews 13:8.**

“God is as powerful to save from sin today as He was in the times of the patriarchs, of David, and of the prophets and apostles. The multitude of cases recorded in sacred history where God has delivered His people from their own iniquities should make the Christian of this time eager to receive divine instruction and zealous to perfect a character that will bear the close inspection of the judgment.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 15.

2. IN THE LAST DAYS

- a. Describe the kind of faith that Christ would like to make more evident among His professed people. James 5:10, 11, 17, 18.
-
-

“Our standard has been too low; our expectations have been too limited. We must make our aims higher than we have made them in the past; for it is possible for us to be filled with all the fullness of God, to have Christ abiding in our hearts by faith.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1892.

- b. What declaration of Christ reveals that faith will be a rare jewel by the time of His second coming? Luke 18:8.
-
-

“He who waits for entire knowledge before he can exercise faith, will never be blessed of God.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 322.

“God will do marvelous things for those who trust in Him. It is because His professed people trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf, that they have not more strength. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him. He will work mightily for a faithful people who obey His word without questioning or doubt.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 19, 1899.

- c. How is faith to be revealed as a vital element in those who escape the wrath of God in the last days? Revelation 14:12.
-
-

- d. What does Jesus declare to every one of us, just as He did to Simon Peter? Luke 22:31, 32. How shall His pleas affect us? Romans 5:1, 2.
-
-

3. HIGHER STANDARDS, NOT LOWER!

- a. How does the writer of Hebrews appeal to us to attain to higher ground? Hebrews 6:1.
-
-

- b. What are some points that we should prayerfully consider in order that such a goal may be accomplished? 1 John 2:6; 5:4, 5.
-
-

“God has a much higher standard for His people to reach than they have reached in the past. What can I say that will give them a consciousness of the responsibility resting on them to be Christlike in word and deed? The lack of Bible religion necessitates much talk about what ought to be done. Did we live the words of Christ, we should be brought into such close contact with Him that we should know what to do in order to advance the work of God. When we take Christ as our example in character building, we shall make decided progress. When we are filled with a desire to be like our Saviour, when we refuse to weave self into the work that we do for the Lord, when we look away from finite counsel to the One who is too wise to err and too good to do us harm, we shall be strong in the strength of the Lord.

“In order to see God, we must humble ourselves. When we accept Christ’s words and Christ’s plans, we shall not place self where Christ should be. We shall not think of going contrary to His plain directions. We shall shun even the thought of self-exaltation.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 24, 1910.

“There should be a decided change in the spirit and character of the work in the places where men and women have received increased light. What are they doing to warn those who do not understand that the Lord is soon coming? ‘Behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain’ (Isaiah 26:21). Who, I ask, is carrying a burden for the souls that are perishing out of Christ? Who will go forth without the camp, bearing the reproach? Who will leave pleasant homes and dear ties of relationship, and carry the precious light of truth to far-off lands? Every day, every moment, comes to those to whom have been entrusted the light of truth, weighted with the terrible significance that men and women in every land are preparing themselves for weal or for woe, fixing their destiny for eternity.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 53, 54.

4. A FAR-SIGHTED FOCUS

- a. Where did the faithful men of old maintain their focus? Hebrews 11:13-16.

- b. How should this inspire us all the more today? Romans 13:11, 12.

“Brethren, the biographies of good men of the past will not meet the demand for this time. The Saviour whom you profess to love and serve wants you to have an experience of your own to relate. What do you believe? Is probation soon to close? Is the time at hand when the Judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, and we be judged according to our works?”—*The Review and Herald*, December 20, 1881.

“I was pointed to the earth and saw that there would have to be a getting ready among those who have of late embraced the third angel’s message. Said the angel, ‘Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye will have to die a greater death to the world than ye have ever yet died.’ I saw that there was a great work to do for them and but little time in which to do it.

“Then I saw that the seven last plagues were soon to be poured out upon those who have no shelter; yet the world regarded them no more than they would so many drops of water that were about to fall. I was then made capable of enduring the awful sight of the seven last plagues, the wrath of God. I saw that His anger was dreadful and terrible, and if He should stretch forth His hand, or lift it in anger, the inhabitants of the world would be as though they had never been, or would suffer from incurable sores and withering plagues that would come upon them, and they would find no deliverance, but be destroyed by them. Terror seized me, and I fell upon my face before the angel and begged of him to cause the sight to be removed, to hide it from me, for it was too dreadful. Then I realized, as never before, the importance of searching the Word of God carefully, to know how to escape the plagues which that Word declares shall come on all the ungodly who shall worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands. It was a great wonder for me that any could transgress the law of God and tread down His holy Sabbath, when such awful threatenings and denunciations were against them.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 64, 65.

“Clear the King’s highway. Lift up the standard higher and still higher.”—*Evangelism*, p. 397.

5. PILGRIMS AND STRANGERS

- a. What type of lifestyle were the heroes of faith willing to endure? Hebrews 11:37, 38. What experience of John is soon to be repeated? Hebrews 11:39, 40; Revelation 1:9.

“[As it was with John exiled on Patmos,] so will it be with the remnant people of God who are scattered—some in the mountain fastnesses, some exiled, some pursued, some persecuted. When the voice of God is heard and the brightness of the glory is revealed, when the trial is over, the dross removed, they know they are in the presence of One who has redeemed them by His own blood. Just what Christ was to John in his exile He will be to His people who are made to feel the hand of oppression for the faith and testimony of Jesus Christ. . . . These were driven by the storm and tempest of persecution to the crevices of the rocks, but were hiding in the Rock of Ages; and in the fastnesses of the mountains, in the caves and dens of the earth, the Saviour reveals His presence and His glory. Yet a little while, and He that is to come will come and will not tarry.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 360.

- b. How is Christ’s call-of-the-hour best summarized to each of us? Colossians 3:1-4.

“Let us be willing to become pilgrims and strangers here [on earth], that we may gain a better country, even a heavenly. The way of the cross is an onward, upward path. As you advance, seeking the things that are above, you will necessarily leave in the distance the things that belong to the world.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1884.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what areas does God expect us to be on higher ground than were the SDA pioneers?
2. Where are we experiencing a lack of faith, and how can we overcome this?
3. What are the keys to successful character building?
4. Where should our focus be, and why are we so easily distracted from this priority?
5. Why are we to take courage, even when facing death, dungeons, or banishment?

FIRST SABBATH OFFERINGS



APRIL 3
Ebenezer
Missionary School,
Colombia (See p. 4.)

MAY 1
Sabbath School
Mission Development:
Barbados (See p. 23.)



JUNE 5
Chapel in Seoul,
South Korea
(See p. 51.)