

A photograph of a dense forest with sunlight streaming through the canopy, creating a dramatic, ethereal atmosphere. The sun is positioned near the top center, with rays of light fanning out across the scene. The trees are tall and slender, with their trunks and branches silhouetted against the bright light. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues and greens, with the bright yellow and white of the sunlight providing a strong contrast.

Secrets to Victory

Sabbath Bible Lessons

Senior Division

July–September, 2007

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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.

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Foreword

Every Christian lives in the hope of spending eternity with our wonderful Saviour. As Seventh Day Adventists we know that our hope is soon to be fulfilled. The great controversy is taking place all around us. While the victory of Christ in this conflict is sure, each one of us is also fighting an individual battle. The Saviour wants each one of us to have victory, and with this goal in mind He has provided us with the secrets of victory.

During this quarter the focus of our study will be on the twelve tribes of Israel and their parallel to the 144,000 saints who receive the seal of the living God in the last days. This topic is very important because all believers in the Advent message who have accepted the Sabbath truth must fully overcome sin in all its forms in order to receive the seal of God in their foreheads—or be lost.

As the Scriptures teach in James 1:1, there are twelve tribes which constitute the spiritual Israel—the church—today. These various tribes are no longer based upon blood lineage, but upon natural personality traits or dispositions. The tribe of which you are a member is likely to be that tribe whose main weakness or sin is similar to the one which you also struggle the hardest to overcome.

Through persevering faith in God, Jacob was an overcomer. A remnant bearing the names of eleven of his sons and one of his grandsons will constitute the 144,000 sealed saints to stand on the sea of glass in the presence of Jesus. There is a deep insight to be gained by studying the experience of the twelve sons of Jacob.

As various members of the spiritual tribes aspiring for victory, we have differing natures. Individuals from one particular tribe may not readily be able to understand or relate to another tribe. While some may be tempted to become frustrated at this, we must realize that God’s plan is perfect in wisdom. “If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body” (1 Corinthians 12:17–20).

As we study the lessons for this quarter, let us keep in mind that “dangers beset every path, and he who comes off conqueror will indeed have a triumphant song to sing in the city of God” (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 538). May the Lord strengthen each Sabbath school student to gain that precious victory!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for Sri Lanka



Plagued by a civil war for the better part of the last 25 years, Sri Lanka is a true success story for the gospel. Caught between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamil fighters, missionaries, and Bible workers have been heroes in bringing the message of salvation to this island.

Known as Ceylon prior to 1952, this nation has historically been referred to as the Pearl of the Indian Ocean. The island received its independence from the United Kingdom on February 4, 1948, having been previously colonized by both the Portuguese and the Dutch.

Today approximately 70% of the population is Buddhist. Hinduism is the second largest religion, practiced by about 15% of the population, mainly among the Tamil population in the north of the country. There is also a large Muslim community.

According to Christian tradition, the message of salvation was first brought to the island in the 1st century by the Apostle Thomas. Portuguese missionaries brought Roman Catholicism to the island in the 15th century and Protestantism was introduced by Dutch missionaries in the 17th century. The overall Christian population has declined since the end of the colonial period. Today Christians make up 8% of the overall population, of which 88% are Roman Catholics.

The work of Reformation has been present on the island for the better part of the last century. While Christianity is generally centered on the southwest of the island, Reformers can be found throughout the country. This scattered membership has often meant that believers living on different sides of the military conflict have been unable to communicate and fellowship for great lengths of time.

This month we are asking for your help in making possible the construction of worship houses in especially rural and remote parts of Sri Lanka. We thank you in advance for your generous contributions.

The Sri Lanka Mission Committee

Reuben

“Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure” (Isaiah 33:6).

“There is in true Christian character an indomitableness that cannot be molded or subdued by adverse circumstances. We must have moral backbone, an integrity that cannot be flattered, bribed, or terrified.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 498.

Suggested Readings: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 43–48.
Mind, Character, and Personality, vol. 2, pp. 685–689.

Sunday

July 1

1. THE EXCELLENCY OF DIGNITY

- a. What words of hope did Leah utter when her first son was born? Genesis 29:32.

- b. Name the favorable qualities which Jacob later mentioned in describing the young man. Genesis 49:3.

- b. Relate some incidents recorded in the Bible through which we can observe some of Reuben's better traits of character. Genesis 30:14 (first part); 37:21, 22, 29; 42:22.

“[Joseph's brothers] would have executed their purpose but for Reuben. He shrank from participating in the murder of his brother, and proposed that Joseph be cast alive into a pit, and left there to perish; secretly intending, however, to rescue him and return him to his father. Having persuaded all to consent to this plan, Reuben left the company, fearing that he might fail to control his feelings, and that his real intentions would be discovered.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 211.

“[After the other brothers had sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites] Reuben returned to the pit, but Joseph was not there. In alarm and self-reproach he rent his garments, and sought his brothers, exclaiming, ‘The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?’—*Ibid.*, p. 212.

2. THE PERMEATING STAIN OF SIN

- a. What particular sin adversely affected the entire course of Reuben's life? Genesis 35:22 (first part); 49:4. What did he forfeit as a consequence of this sin? 1 Chronicles 5:1.

“[Genesis 49:3 quoted.] Thus the father pictured what should have been the position of Reuben as the firstborn son; but his grievous sin at Edar had made him unworthy of the birthright blessing. . . .

“The priesthood was apportioned to Levi, the kingdom and the Messianic promise to Judah, and the double portion of the inheritance to Joseph.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 235.

“On the way to Ephrath another dark crime stained the family of Jacob, causing Reuben, the firstborn son, to be denied the privileges and honors of the birthright.” —*Ibid.*, p. 206.

- b. Explain the serious implications inherent in the violation of the fifth and seventh commandments. Exodus 20:12, 14; 1 Corinthians 5:11–13. What is the church's duty today when any commandment is transgressed, especially when church officers are involved?

“Those who break the seventh commandment should be suspended from the church, and not have its fellowship nor the privileges of the house of God.”—*Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, p. 248.

“I have no real ground of hope for those who have stood as shepherds to the flock, and have for years been borne with by the merciful God, following them with reproof, with warnings, with entreaties, but who have hid their evil ways, and continued in them, thus defying the laws of the God of heaven by practicing fornication. We may leave them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, after all has been done to reform them; but in no case entrust to them the guardianship of souls. False shepherds!”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 428.

3. LESSONS FROM REUBEN'S INSTABILITY

- a. What Bible experience illustrates how Reuben's instability caused his own father to lack confidence in him? Genesis 42:37, 38.

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- b. Concerning Reuben, how was the prophecy of Genesis 49:3, 4 fulfilled?

“The tribe of Reuben never rose to any eminence in Israel; it was not so numerous as Judah, Joseph, or Dan, and was among the first that were carried into captivity.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 235.

- c. How can we promote healthy stability of character both in ourselves and in others? Deuteronomy 11:8; Daniel 11:32 (last part); Romans 16:25 (first part).

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- d. What counsel can fortify an unstable young person? Hebrews 12:12, 13.

“You are a young man of intelligence; you desire to make your life such as will fit you for heaven at last. You are often discouraged at finding yourself weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits and customs of your old life in sin. You find your emotional nature untrue to yourself, to your best resolutions, and to your most solemn pledges. Nothing seems real. Your own instability leads you to doubt the sincerity of those who would do you good. The more you struggle in doubt, the more unreal everything looks to you, until it seems that there is no solid ground for you anywhere. Your promises are like ropes of sand, and you regard in the same unreal light the words and works of those in whom you should trust.

“You will be in constant peril until you understand the true force of the will. You may believe and promise all things, but your promises or your faith are of no value until you put your will on the side of faith and action. If you fight the fight of faith with all your will power, you will conquer.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 513.

4. WEAKNESS IN THE PROGENY

- a. How does God visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children “unto the third and fourth generation”? Exodus 20:5 (last part); 34:7 (last part).

“As a rule, children inherit the dispositions and tendencies of their parents, and imitate their example; so that the sins of the parents are practiced by the children from generation to generation.” — *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 118.

“Every sinful gratification tends to benumb the faculties and deaden the mental and spiritual perceptions, and the word or the Spirit of God can make but a feeble impression upon the heart.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 474.

- b. In the history of Israel, what consequences did the wrong influence of the parents bring upon their children? Isaiah 1:2, 8, 20, 21. What was—and still is—God’s prescription for our salvation? Isaiah 1:16–19; 1 Peter 2:11; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

“Through temptations addressed to the appetite [Satan] has, to a large extent, led men into sin from the time when he induced Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. It was by this same means that he led Israel to murmur against God. Intemperance in eating and drinking, leading as it does to the indulgence of the lower passions, prepares the way for men to disregard all moral obligations. When assailed by temptation, they have little power of resistance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 378.

“Children generally have transmitted to them as a legacy, the appetite and passions of their parents, intensified.”—*The Signs of Times*, July 1, 1880.

“It was by the indulgence of appetite that our first parents sinned and fell. Christ redeemed man’s failure. In the wilderness of temptation he endured the test which man had failed to bear. While he was suffering the keenest pangs of hunger, weak and emaciated from fasting, Satan was at hand with his manifold temptations to assail the Son of God, to take advantage of his weakness and overcome him, and thus thwart the plan of salvation. But Christ was steadfast. He overcame in behalf of the race, that he might rescue them from the degradation of the fall. He showed that in his strength it is possible for us to overcome.”—*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, pp. 207, 208.

5. THE SECRET OF VICTORY

- a. In spite of the weak, unstable tendencies of the tribe of Reuben, what prophecies did Moses and John the Revelator utter both in behalf of his descendants and of those believers who, by nature, bear similar traits of character? Deuteronomy 33:6; Revelation 7:5 (second part). What change is within our reach?

“Some who engage in missionary service are weak, nerveless, spiritless, easily discouraged. They lack push. They have not those positive traits of character that give power to do something—the spirit and energy that kindle enthusiasm. Those who would win success must be courageous and hopeful. They should cultivate not only the passive but the active virtues. While they are to give the soft answer that turns away wrath, they must possess the courage of a hero to resist evil. With the charity that endures all things, they need the force of character that will make their influence a positive power.

“Some have no firmness of character. Their plans and purposes have no definite form and consistency. They are of but little practical use in the world. This weakness, indecision, and inefficiency should be overcome.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 497, 498.

- b. Why is it that believers who naturally bear the unstable tendencies of Reuben can finally be saved among the 144,000? Judges 5:16; Lamentations 3:40; Revelation 3:21.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What early experiences revealed the better side of Reuben’s nature?
2. How does the sin of adultery reveal instability of character?
3. What advice can be given to help an unstable person?
4. Name the consequences which the posterity of Israel suffered because of the weakness of the parents.
5. What hope is extended to unstable souls who place their trust in Christ?

Simeon

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Proverbs 16:32).

“The highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 301.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 362–366.
Ibid., pp. 346–350.

Sunday

July 8

1. SCENES FROM JACOB'S FAMILY LIFE

- a. With what thought in mind did Leah conceive Jacob's second son, Simeon? Genesis 29:33.
-

- b. Relate the experience directly involving Jacob and Leah's only daughter. Genesis 30:21; 34:1–4.
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- c. What lesson should our daughters learn from this experience? Proverbs 20:11.
-

“The tarry of Jacob and his sons at Shechem ended in violence and bloodshed. The one daughter of the household had been brought to shame and sorrow, two brothers were involved in the guilt of murder, a whole city had been given to ruin and slaughter, in retaliation for the lawless deed of one rash youth. The beginning that led to results so terrible was the act of Jacob's daughter, who ‘went out to see the daughters of the land,’ thus venturing into association with the ungodly. He who seeks pleasure among those that fear not God is placing himself on Satan's ground and inviting his temptations.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 204.

Monday

July 9

2. SELF-RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION

- a. What deception and cruelty did Simeon employ with the help of his younger brother, Levi? Genesis 34:13–19, 24–26.
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- b. Describe the response of Jacob, and how Simeon and Levi tried to justify their actions. Genesis 34:30, 31.
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“The treacherous cruelty of Simeon and Levi was not unprovoked; yet in their course toward the Shechemites they committed a grievous sin. They had carefully concealed from Jacob their intentions, and the tidings of their revenge filled him with horror. . . . Jacob felt that there was cause for deep humiliation. Cruelty and falsehood were manifest in the character of his sons.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 204, 205.

- c. How was the cruelty of Simeon's nature further confirmed in the crime committed by the sons of Jacob against Joseph? Genesis 37:18–20.
-

“In the cruel treatment of their brother [Joseph], Simeon had been the instigator and chief actor.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 226.

- d. What warnings do we have against self-righteousness? Proverbs 26:12.
-

“God cannot connect with those who live to please themselves, to make themselves first. Those who do this will in the end be last of all. The sin that is most nearly hopeless and incurable is pride of opinion, self-conceit. This stands in the way of all growth. When a man has defects of character, yet fails of realizing this; when he is so imbued with self-sufficiency that he cannot see his fault, how can he be cleansed? ‘They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick’ (Matthew 9:12). How can one improve when he thinks his ways perfect?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 199, 200.

“To know oneself is great knowledge. True self-knowledge leads to a humility that will open the way for the Lord to develop the mind, and mold and discipline the character.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 419.

3. SCATTERED UNDER GOD'S JUDGMENT

- a. What was prophesied about Simeon, and how was this fulfilled? Genesis 49:5–7.

“[Simeon and Levi] had been united in their cruelty toward the Shechemites, and they had also been the most guilty in the selling of Joseph. Concerning them it was declared—‘I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.’ . . .

“Moses, in his last blessing, made no reference to Simeon. In the settlement of Canaan this tribe had only a small portion of Judah’s lot, and such families as afterward became powerful formed different colonies and settled in territory outside the borders of the Holy Land.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 235, 236.

- b. How does God regard any manifestation of fierce passion against another person? Proverbs 25:28; 1 John 2:9; 3:15. How are we to overcome this problem?

“True Christian politeness should be cultivated. No one else can lessen our influence as we ourselves can lessen it through the indulgence of uncontrollable temper. A naturally petulant man does not know true happiness, and is seldom content. He is ever hoping to get into a more favorable position, or to so change his surroundings that he will have peace and rest of mind. His life seems to be burdened with heavy crosses and trials, when, had he controlled his temper and bridled his tongue, many of these annoyances might have been avoided. It is the ‘soft answer’ which ‘turneth away wrath.’ Revenge has never conquered a foe.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 367, 368.

“So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 487.

4. SLAIN BY LICENTIOUSNESS

- a. Compare the number of Simeonites counted at Sinai with the number calculated after the apostasy instigated by Balaam at Shittim. Numbers 1:22, 23; 25:1–5, 9; 26:2, 14. What does this imply?

“At the numbering of Israel, just before their entrance to Canaan, Simeon was the smallest tribe.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 235, 236.

- b. How does the tragic experience of Solomon warn us against the destructive nature of licentious passions? Nehemiah 13:26; Proverbs 7:1, 5, 26, 27. What special admonition is addressed today to all believers in the Advent message?

“A terrible picture of the condition of the world has been presented before me. Immorality abounds everywhere. Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers of virtue and true goodness are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence. The iniquity which abounds is not merely confined to the unbeliever and the scoffer. Would that this were the case, but it is not. Many men and women who profess the religion of Christ are guilty. Even some who profess to be looking for His appearing are no more prepared for that event than Satan himself. They are not cleansing themselves from all pollution.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 346.

“Even some who profess to keep all the commandments of God are guilty of the sin of adultery. What can I say to arouse their benumbed sensibilities? Moral principle, strictly carried out, becomes the only safeguard of the soul. If ever there was a time when the diet should be of the most simple kind, it is now. Meat should not be placed before our children. Its influence is to excite and strengthen the lower passions, and has a tendency to deaden the moral powers. Grains and fruits prepared free from grease, and in as natural a condition as possible, should be the food for the tables of all who claim to be preparing for translation to heaven. The less feverish the diet, the more easily can the passions be controlled. Gratification of taste should not be consulted irrespective of physical, intellectual, or moral health.”—*Ibid.*, p. 352.

5. OUR ONLY HOPE

- a. What gave Simeon an opportunity to think about his wicked traits of character? Genesis 42:6, 7, 17, 24.

“The three days in the Egyptian prison were days of bitter sorrow as the brothers [of Joseph] reflected upon their past sins.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 225.

“On his return [to the chamber where his brothers were, Joseph] commanded that Simeon be bound before them and again committed to prison.”—*Ibid.*, p. 226.

“[Later, the brothers’] anxiety was relieved, and when Simeon, who had been released from prison, joined them, they felt that God was indeed gracious unto them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 228.

- b. What warnings and appeals does God make to violators of the commandments? Proverbs 16:32; Isaiah 1:16–19; Matthew 5:6, 9. What hope does He offer for souls seeking to overcome the carnal traits of Simeon? Revelation 7:7 (first part).

“Self is the enemy we most need to fear. No form of vice has a more baleful effect upon the character than has human passion not under the control of the Holy Spirit. No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 485.

“Sensuality is the sin of the age. But the religion of Jesus Christ will hold the lines of control over every species of unlawful liberty; the moral powers will hold the lines of control over every thought, word, and action.”—*Medical Ministry*, pp. 142, 143.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What were the consequences of Dinah’s indiscreet behavior?
2. Name the action which further hardened the cruelty of Simeon.
3. What should we be preparing for the heavenly Canaan where Simeonites and Levites are no longer kept separate from one another?
4. Name some practical ways to escape today’s licentiousness.
5. What counsel could you offer a struggling Simeonite?

Levi

“He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Malachi 3:3).

“In the case of [the] tribe [of Levi]. . . their fidelity of Jehovah when the other tribes apostatized, secured their appointment to the sacred service of the sanctuary, and thus the curse was changed into a blessing.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 236.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 245–252.
Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 540–544.

1. CEASE FROM ANGER

- a. What did Leah declare when she gave birth to her a third son? Genesis 29:34.

NOTE: The name “Levi” means “joined,” or “attached to.”

- b. What denunciation did Jacob pronounce upon Levi? Genesis 49:5–7.

- c. As we learned in our study of Simeon, what lesson can the Christian learn from the anger of Levi? Psalm 37:8; Proverbs 27:4 (first part).

“We must give others an example of not stopping at every trifling offense in order to vindicate our rights. We may expect that false reports will circulate about us; but if we follow a straight course, if we remain indifferent to these things, others will also be indifferent. Let us leave to God the care of our reputation. And thus, like sons and daughters of God, we shall show that we have self-control. We shall show that we are led by the Spirit of God, and that we are slow to anger. Slander can be lived down by our manner of living; it is not lived down by words of indignation.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, pp. 1160, 1161.

2. CHARACTER FORMED AND TESTED

- a. How was the character of the tribe of Levi manifested in a time of religious crisis? Exodus 32:1, 6, 9–11, 26–29. What does this teach us about true consecration to God?

“Those who had not joined in the apostasy [at Sinai] were to take their position at the right of Moses; those who were guilty but repentant, at the left. The command was obeyed. It was found that the tribe of Levi had taken no part in the idolatrous worship.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 324.

“[Exodus 32:26–29 quoted.] Here Moses defines genuine consecration as obedience to God, to stand in vindication of the right and to show a readiness to carry out the purpose of God in the most unpleasant duties, showing that the claims of God are higher than the claims of friends or the lives of the nearest relatives. The sons of Levi consecrated themselves to God to execute His justice against crime and sin.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 301.

“It is the privilege of the watchmen on the walls of Zion to live so near to God, and to be so susceptible to the impressions of His Spirit, that He can work through them to tell men and women of their peril and point them to the place of safety. Faithfully are they to warn them of the sure result of transgression, and faithfully are they to safeguard the interests of the church. At no time may they relax their vigilance. Theirs is a work requiring the exercise of every faculty of the being. In trumpet tones their voices are to be lifted, and never are they to sound one wavering, uncertain note.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 361.

- b. Regarding the tribe of Levi, what factors changed Jacob’s denunciation (Genesis 49:5–7) into Moses’ commendation? Deuteronomy 33:8–11.

“By divine direction the tribe of Levi was set apart for the service of the sanctuary. In the earliest times every man was the priest of his own household. In the days of Abraham the priesthood was regarded as the birthright of the eldest son. Now, instead of the firstborn of all Israel, the Lord accepted the tribe of Levi for the work of the sanctuary. By this signal honor He manifested His approval of their fidelity, both in adhering to His service and in executing His judgments when Israel apostatized in the worship of the golden calf.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 350.

3. SOME NOTABLE LEVITES

- a. Name one notable member of the tribe of Levi, and the individual who had been largely responsible for his strength of character. Exodus 2:1–10.

“God had heard [Moses’] . . . mother’s prayers. . . . She faithfully improved her opportunity to educate her child for God. She felt confident that he had been preserved for some great work, and she knew that he must soon be given up to his royal mother, to be surrounded with influences that would tend to lead him away from God. All this rendered her more diligent and careful in his instruction than in that of her other children. . . .

“How far-reaching in its results was the influence of that one Hebrew woman, and she an exile and a slave! The whole future life of Moses, the great mission which he fulfilled as the leader of Israel, testifies to the importance of the work of the Christian mother. There is no other work that can equal this.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 243, 244.

- b. How did Aaron, Moses’ brother, reveal his pliable nature? Exodus 32:21–25. Explain how he gained the victory over himself by demonstrating self-control, thus vindicating the honor of God. Leviticus 10:1–7.

“[When fire from God’s presence destroyed Nadab and Abihu,] Aaron bore his severe affliction with patience and humble submission. Sorrow and keen agony wrung his soul. He was convicted of his neglect of duty. . . . Aaron did not see, any more than many Christian parents now see, that his misplaced love and the indulgence of his children in wrong was preparing them for the certain displeasure of God and for His wrath to break forth upon them to their destruction.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 295.

“[Leviticus 10:6, 7, 3 quoted.] Aaron was silent. The death of his sons, cut down without warning, in so terrible a sin—a sin which he now saw to be the result of his own neglect of duty—wrung the father’s heart with anguish, but he gave his feelings no expression. By no manifestation of grief must he seem to sympathize with sin. The congregation must not be led to murmur against God. The Lord would teach His people to acknowledge the justice of His corrections, that others may fear.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 361.

4. SACRED TRUSTS

- a. Explain how Jacob's prophecy that Levi would be "scattered" (Genesis 49:7) was honorably fulfilled. Numbers 3:45; 18:20–24; Deuteronomy 10:8, 9.

- b. Where were the Levites scattered, and what was their mission? 2 Chronicles 11:13; Leviticus 10:11.

"The appointed ministers of the sanctuary, the Levites received no landed inheritance; they dwelt together in cities set apart for their use, and received their support from the tithes and the gifts and offerings devoted to God's service."—*Education*, p. 148.

- c. Give evidence to show how the tithing system remains in effect under the New Dispensation. Hebrews 7:4–8.

"A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied. Those who make this use of the tithe are departing from the Lord's arrangement. God will judge for these things.

"One reasons that the tithe may be applied to school purposes. Still others reason that canvassers and colporteurs should be supported from the tithe. But a great mistake is made when the tithe is drawn from the object for which it is to be used—the support of the ministers."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 248, 249.

- d. After the rebellion of Jeroboam, how did the Levites become instrumental in joining the people together? 2 Chronicles 11:13, 14, 16, 17. Explain two New Testament applications of this principle. 2 Corinthians 5:18–20; Ephesians 4:1–3, 15, 16.

"Christ the great Head of the church, has carried forward His work in the world by chosen ambassadors, through whom He speaks to the children of men, and ministers to their needs. The position of those who have been called of God to labor in word and doctrine for the upbuilding of His church, is one of grave responsibility. In Christ's stead they are to beseech men and women to be reconciled to God; and they can fulfil their mission only as they receive wisdom and power from above."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 13.

5. REFINING THE "SONS OF LEVI"

- a. What shows that even the Levites were often satisfied with a mere outward form of religion? Ezra 9:1; Malachi 2:8, 9; Luke 10:30–32.

- b. Before the coming of the Lord, what work must be done also in behalf of those that are called the "sons of Levi"? Malachi 3:3. Describe the blessed result. Revelation 7:7 (second part).

"We should have a spirit of progress. We must guard continually against being fixed in our views, feelings, and actions. The work of God is onward. Reforms must be carried on, and we must take hold and help move on the car of reform. Energy, tempered with patience and ambition, and balanced by wisdom, is now needed by every Christian. The work of saving souls is yet left to us, the disciples of Christ. Not one of us is excused. Many have become dwarfed and stunted in their Christian life because of inaction. We should employ our time diligently while in this world. How earnestly should we improve every opportunity of doing good, of bringing others to a knowledge of the truth! Our motto should ever be, 'Onward, higher,' surely, steadily onward to duty and to victory. . . .

"This is the process, the refining, purifying process, which is to be carried on by the Lord of hosts. The work is most trying to the soul, but it is only through this process that the rubbish and defiling impurities can be removed. Our trials are all necessary to bring us close to our heavenly Father, in obedience to His will, that we may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 540, 541.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning and significance of the name "Levi"?
2. Narrate the experience of the golden calf at Sinai.
3. Explain the scattering of the Levites and the tithe question.
4. How were the Levites instrumental in joining together many of the children of Israel?
5. Explain the purpose and manner of God's refining process.

Judah

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be” (Genesis 49:10).

“The priesthood was apportioned to Levi, [and] the kingdom and the Messianic promise to Judah.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 235.

Suggested Readings: *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 377.
Steps to Christ, pp. 115, 124–126.

Sunday

July 22

1. PRAISED BY HIS BRETHREN

- a. What was Leah’s frame of mind when she bore her fourth son, Judah? Genesis 29:35. How was her attitude exemplary at that time? Psalm 50:23. Explain the meaning of the name “Judah” (see marginal note in the Bible).

“While we review, not the dark chapters in our experience, but the manifestations of God’s great mercy and unfailing love, we shall praise far more than complain. We shall talk of the loving faithfulness of God as the true, tender, compassionate shepherd of His flock, which He has declared that none shall pluck out of His hand. The language of the heart will not be selfish murmuring and repining. Praise, like clear-flowing streams, will come from God’s truly believing ones.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 367.

- b. How did Judah express his remorse at the idea of leaving Joseph to die of starvation? Genesis 37:25–27. How did he partially admit his sin in the case of Tamar? Genesis 38:24–26.

“Some of [Joseph’s brothers] were ill at ease; they did not feel the satisfaction they had anticipated from their revenge. Soon a company of travelers was seen approaching. It was a caravan of Ishmaelites from beyond Jordan, on their way to Egypt with spices and other merchandise. Judah now proposed to sell their brother to these heathen traders instead of leaving him to die.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 211.

Monday

July 23

2. A REMARKABLE CONTRAST

- a. Describe one manifestation which shows how Judah prevailed above his brethren. Genesis 44:14–18, 30–34; 46:28 (first part).

“In words of touching eloquence [Judah] described his father’s grief at the loss of Joseph and his reluctance to let Benjamin come with them to Egypt, as he was the only son left of his mother, Rachel, whom Jacob so dearly loved. [Genesis 44:30–34 quoted.] . . . Joseph was satisfied. He had seen in his brothers the fruits of true repentance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 230.

- b. Explain the contrast between Reuben and Judah as far as personality is concerned. Genesis 43:8–13 (cf. 42:36–38); 1 Chronicles 5:2. Why are trustworthiness and dependability such valuable traits?

“We are living in an age when almost everything is superficial. There is but little stability and firmness of character, because the training and education of children from their cradle is superficial. Their characters are built upon sliding sand. Self-denial and self-control have not been molded into their characters.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 143.

“Reliable men are very scarce for the reason that the hearts of men are so devoted to their own selfish interests that they know no other.”—*Ibid*, vol. 2, p. 636.

“It is not so much the religion of the pulpit as the religion of the family that reveals our real character. The minister’s wife, his children, and those who are employed as helpers in his family are best qualified to judge of his piety. A good man will be a blessing to his household. Wife, children, and helpers will all be the better for his religion.”—*Ibid*, vol. 5, p. 161.

“A man may not bear the most pleasant exterior, he may be deficient in many respects; but if he has a reputation for straightforward honesty, he will gain the confidence of others. The love of truth, the dependence and confidence which men can place in him, will remove or overbear objectionable features in his character. Trustworthiness in your place and calling, a willingness to deny self for the purpose of benefiting others, will bring peace of mind and the favor of God.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 353.

3. FIRMNESS PERPETUATED IN THE SEED

- a. What did Jacob say about Judah, and why? Genesis 49:8.

“The crowning blessings of the birthright were transferred to Judah. The significance of the name—which denotes praise—is unfolded in the prophetic history of this tribe:

“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father’s children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion: who shall rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 236.

- b. How can we be inspired by Jacob’s description of Judah’s firmness of character? Genesis 49:9; Proverbs 28:1.

“The lion, king of the forest, is a fitting symbol of this tribe, from which came David, and the Son of David, Shiloh, the true ‘Lion of the tribe of Judah,’ to whom all powers shall finally bow and all nations render homage.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 236.

“Remember that the nearer we approach the time of Christ’s coming, the more earnestly and firmly we are to work; for we are opposed by the whole synagogue of Satan. We do not need feverish excitement, but that courage which is born of genuine faith.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 475.

“Some men have no firmness of character. They are like a ball of putty and can be pressed into any conceivable shape. They are of no definite form and consistency, and are of no practical use in the world. This weakness, indecision, and inefficiency must be overcome. There is an indomitableness about true Christian character which cannot be molded or subdued by adverse circumstances. Men must have moral backbone, an integrity which cannot be flattered, bribed, or terrified.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 297.

“God desires us to make use of every opportunity for securing a preparation for His work. He expects us to put all our energies into its performance, and to keep our hearts alive to its sacredness and its fearful responsibilities.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 291.

4. A RICH HISTORY

- a. How did God honor the tribe of Judah when the tabernacle was built? Exodus 31:1–5.

“The Lord gave an important lesson to His people in all ages when to Moses on the mount He gave instruction regarding the building of the tabernacle. In that work He required perfection in every detail. Moses was proficient in all the learning of the Egyptians; he had a knowledge of God, and God’s purposes had been revealed to him in visions; but he did not know how to engrave and embroider. . . .

“Then God Himself explained how the work was to be accomplished. He signified by name the persons He desired to do a certain work. Bezaleel was to be the architect. This man belonged to the tribe of Judah—a tribe that God delighted to honor.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 59.

- b. Name some lessons we can learn from Caleb, another member of the tribe of Judah. Numbers 13:6, 30; 14:24.

“[Caleb] had believed God’s promise that He would put His people in possession of Canaan, and in this he had followed the Lord fully. . . . Now at upwards of fourscore his vigor was unabated. He did not ask for himself a land already conquered, but the place which above all others the spies had thought it impossible to subdue. By the help of God he would wrest his stronghold from the very giants whose power had staggered the faith of Israel. It was no desire for honor or aggrandizement that prompted Caleb’s request. The brave old warrior was desirous of giving to the people an example that would honor God, and encourage the tribes fully to subdue the land which their fathers had deemed unconquerable.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 512, 513.

“Calebs are the men most needed in these last days.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 130.

- c. Relate how one dark chapter in the history of Judah was contrasted by the shining faithfulness of a few young witnesses for God. Daniel 1:1, 6–8; 3:16–18.

5. A BOUNTIFUL BLESSING

- a. What prophecy had been given regarding the tribe of Judah, and how will this be fulfilled? Genesis 49:10; Isaiah 7:14–16; Matthew 21:9.

“Glorious are the promises made to David and his house, promises that look forward to the eternal ages, and find their complete fulfillment in Christ.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 754.

- b. How is Moses’ prayer for Judah significant for us today? Deuteronomy 33:1, 7. What accounts for the fact that the name of this tribe is mentioned first in the list of the sealed saints? Revelation 7:5 (first part).

“We need to study, to meditate, and to pray. Then we shall have spiritual eyesight to discern the inner courts of the celestial temple. We shall catch the themes of song and thanksgiving of the heavenly choir round about the throne. When Zion shall arise and shine, her light will be most penetrating, and precious songs of praise and thanksgiving will be heard in the assemblies of the saints. Murmuring and complaining over little disappointments and difficulties will cease. As we apply the golden eyesalve we shall see the glories beyond. Faith will cut through the heavy shadow of Satan, and we shall see our Advocate offering up the incense of His own merits in our behalf. When we see this as it is, as the Lord desires us to see it, we shall be filled with a sense of the immensity and diversity of the love of God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 368.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the spiritual strength inherent in the name “Judah.”
2. How do we know that Judah was respected in his home life?
3. Describe some characteristics of the tribe of Judah.
4. Relate some significant points about Bezaleel, Caleb, Daniel, and his companions.
5. Compare Moses’ prayer for Judah with Jesus’ prayer in behalf of all believers.

First Sabbath Offering

for the missionary schools
around the world



How great is the need for training! God’s mandate in these last days is to educate and train an army of young men and women in such a way that they will be consistent, well-balanced Christians, able to understand and explain the Scriptures. With the great work before us of enlightening the world, it is our duty to search earnestly the sacred word, that we may know what is truth, and be able to present it to others intelligently.

“In every land the want of education among our workers is painfully apparent. We realize that education is not only necessary to the proper fulfillment of the duties of domestic life, but necessary for success in all branches of usefulness.

“In view of the need of education for the work of God, and for the successful fulfillment of the various responsibilities of life, how thankful should we be that—a school is about to be opened in _____ under the direction of earnest believers in the truth for this time. For the success of this new enterprise, for the benefit it will bring to you and your children, let all our brethren and sisters now take hold heartily to cooperate with those who have come to bear the burden of the work.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 202.

Brethren and sisters, by His grace God has opened the way for a few missionary schools to be established to prepare youth to labor in His vineyard. Since the message of reformation has almost reached the different corners of the world, we are in great need of more trained workers. Therefore, more missionary schools are needed around the world.

On August 4, 2007, kindly remember this important cause with your help, so that this vital need can be fulfilled. May the Lord bless you abundantly.

M. Natarajan, GC Education Secretary

The Contrast Between Dan and Naphtali

“There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who are thou that judgest another?” (James 4:12).

“Would all professed Christians use their investigative powers to see what evils needed to be corrected in themselves, instead of talking of others’ wrongs, there would be a more healthy condition in the church today.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 96.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 193–197.
Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 94–98.

Sunday

July 29

1. THE TWO SONS OF BILHAH

- a. What did Rachel do in desperation when she saw that she was unable to conceive? Genesis 30:1–6. What serious warnings should we heed against indulging in this type of attitude?

“Jealousy and stubbornness are the natural fruits of selfishness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 545.

“Fellow laborers, we are each sowing seed in the fields of life. As is the seed, so will be the harvest. If we sow distrust, envy, jealousy, self-love, bitterness of thought and feeling, we shall reap bitterness to our own souls.”—Ibid., vol. 5, p. 30.

“Envy, jealousy, evil surmising, and evilspeaking are of Satan, and they effectually bar the way against the Holy Spirit’s working.”—Ibid., vol. 6, p. 42.

- b. Relate the words of Rachel when her maid Bilhah gave birth to Jacob’s second son. Genesis 30:7, 8.

Monday

July 30

2. DIFFERING IN POTENTIAL

- a. Although Dan was the son of a concubine, how did Jacob show honor and deep respect for the natural ability of the young man? Genesis 49:16.

- b. Explain the potential value of keen observation and discernment, when rightly employed. Matthew 10:16; 1 Corinthians 12:7, 8.

“The servants of God who teach the truth should be men of judgment.”—*Early Writings*, p. 102.

“It is impossible for any one to foresee to what he may be called. He may be placed in situations where he will need quick discernment and well balanced arguments.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 257.

“Tact and good judgment increase the usefulness of the laborer a hundredfold.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 119.

- c. How was Naphtali described as timidly fleeing from danger and burdens? Genesis 49:21 (first part).

“If [Brother Pierce] would overcome timidity and possess more confidence that God would be with him and strengthen him he would be much more happy and a greater blessing to others.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 630.

- d. When and how did the Naphtalites eventually progress to distinction? Deuteronomy 33:23; Judges 4:4, 6–8, 14, 15; 5:18. How can timidity be overcome?

“What a thought that God chooses a man and brings him into close connection with Himself, and gives him a mission to undertake, a work to do, for Him. A weak man is made strong, a timid man is made brave.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 167.

3. DAN

- a. How was the sharp keenness of Dan perverted into backbiting? Genesis 49:17. What warning should be impressed upon us today, to flee from this widespread pitfall of Satan? James 3:5–8.

“[James 3:15–18 quoted.] . . . He who opens his heart to the suggestions of the enemy, taking in evil surmisings, and cherishing jealousy, frequently misconstrues this evil-mindedness, calling it special foresight, discrimination, or discernment in detecting guilt and fathoming the evil motives of others. He considers that a precious gift has been vouchsafed to him; and he draws apart from the very brethren with whom he should be in harmony; he climbs upon the judgment seat, and shuts his heart against the one he supposes to be in error, as though he himself were above temptation. Jesus separates from him, and leaves him to walk in the sparks of his own kindling.

“Let no one among you glory any longer against the truth by declaring that this spirit is a necessary consequence of dealing faithfully with wrongdoers and of standing in defense of the truth. Such wisdom has many admirers, but it is very deceptive and harmful. It does not come from above, but is the fruit of an unregenerated heart. Its originator is Satan himself. Let no accuser of others credit himself with discernment; for in so doing he clothes the attributes of Satan with the garments of righteousness.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, pp. 936, 937.

- b. What other evil also occurred among the ranks of the tribe of Dan? Judges 18:1, 2, 26–30. How did the craftsmen from the tribes of Judah and Dan misuse their talents? 2 Chronicles 2:1, 11–14.

“In the tribes of Judah and of Dan there were men who were regarded as especially ‘cunning’ in the finer arts. For a time these men remained humble and unselfish; but gradually, almost imperceptibly, they lost their hold upon God and His truth. They began to ask for higher wages because of their superior skill. In some instances their request was granted, but more often those asking higher wages found employment in the surrounding nations. In place of the noble spirit of self-sacrifice that had filled the hearts of their illustrious ancestors, they cherished a spirit of covetousness, of grasping for more and more. They served heathen kings with their God-given skill, and dishonored their Maker.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 174, 175.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WORDS

- a. How does Inspiration establish the contrast between Naphtali’s goodly words and the evil effects of an unregenerate tongue? Genesis 49:21 (last part); Proverbs 16:24; Matthew 12:36, 37.

“True Christians will not exult in exposing the faults and deficiencies of others. They will turn away from vileness and deformity, to fix the mind upon that which is attractive and lovely. To the Christian every act of faultfinding, every word of censure or condemnation, is painful.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 96.

“Those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious cannot partake of the dish of nonsense, and folly, and backbiting. They will say decidedly, ‘Take this dish away. I do not want to eat such food. It is not the bread from heaven. It is eating and drinking the very spirit of the devil; for it is his business to be an accuser of the brethren.’”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 458.

- b. Of the seven things which the Lord list as abominations to Him, how many are directly related to speech? Proverbs 6:16–19.

“Those who criticize and condemn one another are breaking God’s commandments, and are an offense to Him. They neither love God nor their fellow beings.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 937.

- c. What is the first thing one should do—and not do—if he or she sees a brother or sister in some fault? Proverbs 25:9; Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1.

“It pains me to say that there are unruly tongues among church members. There are false tongues that feed on mischief. There are sly, whispering tongues. There is tattling, impertinent meddling, adroit quizzing. Among the lovers of gossip some are actuated by curiosity, others by jealousy, many by hatred against those through whom God has spoken to reprove them. All these discordant elements are at work. Some conceal their real sentiments, while others are eager to publish all they know, or even suspect, of evil against another.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 94.

5. SOMETHING NOT ALLOWED IN HEAVEN

- a. How does God view those who harbor a judgmental attitude toward others? Psalm 101:5; Romans 2:1–3; James 4:11, 12.

“To unite with the faultfinding element, to be accusers of the brethren, to take up the reproach they lay at your door is seconding the work of the enemy by playing yourself into his hands to make his work a success.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 266, 267.

“The Lord is testing and proving His people. You may be just as severe and critical with your own defective character as you please; but be kind, pitiful, and courteous toward others.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 97.

“All pride must perish, all jealousy be overcome, all ambition for supremacy be given up, and the meekness and trust of the child be encouraged.”—*Ibid.*, p. 130.

- b. Although the name of Naphtali is among the overcomers, why is it that Dan’s name is not there? Revelation 7:5–8; Psalm 15:1–3.

“What a world of gossip would be prevented if every man would remember that those who tell him the faults of others will as freely publish his faults at a favorable opportunity. We should endeavor to think well of all men, especially our brethren, until compelled to think otherwise. We should not hastily credit evil reports. . . . Should a brother go astray, then is the time to show your real interest in him. Go to him kindly, pray with and for him, remembering the infinite price which Christ has paid for his redemption. In this way you may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 58, 59.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain how the attitude of Rachel affected Bilhah’s offspring, and how this attitude can affect God’s people in general.
2. What was Naphtali like, and how only will the remnant of his tribe overcome?
3. Explain the problem of Dan.
4. What dangers, concerning words, can easily plague God’s people?
5. Why is a judgmental spirit so destructive?

Gad and Asher

“Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last” (Genesis 49:19).

“Approach the most obstinate in a spirit of kindness and affection. Dip your words into the oil of grace, and let them flow forth from your lips in love.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1086.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 273–275.
Our High Calling, p. 125.

1. GAD

- a. How did Leah respond to Rachel’s idea to obtain children by her maid? Genesis 30:9. What principle must Christians always keep in mind? 2 Corinthians 10:12.

“Everyone should realize how cruel is the spirit of envy, rivalry, distrust, faultfinding, and dissension. We call God our Father; we claim to be children of one family, and when there is a disposition to lessen the respect and influence of another to build up ourselves, we please the enemy and grieve Him whom we profess to follow. The tenderness and mercy that Jesus has revealed in His own precious life should be an example to us of the manner in which we should treat our fellow beings and especially those who are our brethren in Christ.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 222.

- b. What was declared concerning Gad? Genesis 30:10, 11; Deuteronomy 33:20. How are church workers especially warned against fostering a competitive spirit?

“Those who are true to their calling as messengers for God will not seek honor for themselves. Love for self will be swallowed up in love for Christ. No rivalry will mar the precious cause of the gospel.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 179.

2. ASHER

- a. What is written about Jacob and Zilpah's second son? Genesis 30:12, 13; 49:20.
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- b. Describe one hallmark of this type of personality in its natural, unconverted state. Psalm 55:21.
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"Do not receive flattery, even in your religious life. Flattery is an art by which Satan lieth in wait to deceive and to puff up the human agent with high thoughts of himself."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 304.

"Give children but little notice. Let them learn to amuse themselves. Do not put them on exhibition before visitors as prodigies of wit or wisdom, but leave them as far as possible to the simplicity of their childhood. One great reason why so many children are forward, bold, and impertinent is they are noticed and praised too much, and their smart, sharp sayings repeated in their hearing. Endeavor not to censure unduly, nor to overwhelm with praise and flattery. Satan will all too soon sow evil seed in their young hearts, and you should not aid him in his work."—*Child Guidance*, pp. 37, 38.

"We need to shun everything that would encourage pride and self-sufficiency; therefore we should beware of giving or receiving flattery or praise. It is Satan's work to flatter. He deals in flattery as well as in accusing and condemnation. Thus he seeks to work the ruin of the soul. Those who give praise to men are used by Satan as his agents. Let the workers for Christ direct every word of praise away from themselves. Let self be put out of sight. Christ alone is to be exalted. 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood' (Revelation 1:5), let every eye be directed, and praise from every heart ascend."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 161, 162.

- c. What is written about the deportment of the two sons of Zilpah? Genesis 37:2 (last part).
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"The restless spirit naturally inclines to mischief; the active mind, if left unoccupied with better things, will give heed to that which Satan may suggest."—*Child Guidance*, p. 33.

3. THE TRIBE OF GAD

- a. How were the people of Gad described? 1 Chronicles 12:8, 14, 15.
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- b. What happened to the territory of Gad? Jeremiah 49:1.
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- c. How was the land of Gad (part of the Gilead region) recovered? Judges 11:1, 6, 32, 33; Hebrews 11:32.
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"Oh, the long-suffering mercy of our God! When His people put away the sins that had shut out His presence, He heard their prayers and at once began to work for them. A deliverer was raised up in the person of Jephthah, a Gileadite, who made war upon the Ammonites and effectually destroyed their power."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 558.

- d. Which other member of the tribe of Gad was distinguished for his steadfast faithfulness? 1 Kings 17:1; 2 Kings 2:11.
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"Elijah, amid the general apostasy, did not seek to hide the fact that he served the God of heaven. Baal's prophets numbered four hundred and fifty, his priests, four hundred, and his worshipers were thousands; yet Elijah did not try to make it appear that he was on the popular side. He grandly stood alone. The mountain was covered with people full of eager expectation. The king came in great pomp, and the idolaters, confident of triumph, shouted his welcome. But God had been greatly dishonored. One man, and only one man, appeared to vindicate the honor of God. With clear, trumpetlike tones Elijah addressed the vast multitude: 'How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him' (1 Kings 18:21). The result was that the Lord God, who ruleth in the heavens, was vindicated, and the Baal worshipers were slain. Where are the Elijahs of today?"—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 526, 527.

4. THE TRIBE OF ASHER

- a. What lessons can we learn from Moses' blessing upon Asher? Deuteronomy 33:24. How can these blessings be extended to us? How can we forfeit them?

"Ask God to give you much of the oil of His grace. Carefully consider every word, whether it be written or spoken."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 104.

"What harm is wrought in the family circle by the utterance of impatient words; for the impatient utterance of one leads another to retort in the same spirit and manner. Then come words of retaliation, words of self-justification, and it is by such words that a heavy, galling yoke is manufactured for your neck; for all these bitter words will come back in a baleful harvest to your soul.

"Those who indulge in such language will experience shame, loss of self-respect, loss of self-confidence, and will have bitter remorse and regret that they allowed themselves to lose self-control and speak in this way. How much better would it be if words of this character were never spoken. How much better to have the oil of grace in the heart, to be able to pass by all provocation, and bear all things with Christlike meekness and forbearance."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 327.

- b. What can we learn from one member of the tribe of Asher, who was a prophetess of God? Luke 2:36–38.

"Anna . . . came in and confirmed Simeon's testimony concerning Christ. As Simeon spoke, her face lighted up with the glory of God, and she poured out her heartfelt thanks that she had been permitted to behold Christ the Lord."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 55.

"The cross of Calvary is to be a constant reminder of the future, nobler world, the mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare for all who love Him. We are to be enthusiasts. And as we by faith view the glories within the temple of God, we shall seek to awaken enthusiasm in others, a desire to behold things unseen. Our work is to attract minds away from earth to heaven; to take others with us as companions, to walk the path that is cast up for the ransomed of the Lord. The children of the heavenly King are to move among men, not as citizens of the world, but as citizens of the kingdom above. We are pilgrims and strangers in this world, seeking a better country, even a heavenly."—*The Signs of the Times*, August 17, 1891.

5. KEY TO SUCCESS

- a. What illustrates the secret of success for the tribe of Gad, long beset by a "troop" of temptations? Genesis 49:19; 1 Chronicles 5:18, 20. What promise is made to spiritual Gadite overcomers? Revelation 7:5 (last part).

"Your only hope is in confessing your backslidings. God has let light shine upon your pathway. Will you choose your own course of corruption? Will you cast the truth behind you because it will not sustain you in a course of iniquity? Oh, be entreated to 'rend your heart, and not your garments' (Joel 2:13). Make thorough work for eternity. God will be merciful to you. He will be entreated in your behalf. He will not despise a broken and contrite spirit. Will you turn? Will you live? Your soul is worth saving; it is precious."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 303.

- b. Explain the secret of the tribe of Asher's success. Deuteronomy 33:25; 2 Chronicles 30:11; James 4:10; Revelation 7:6 (first part). What work is to be done for those who want to be numbered among the 144,000? Jeremiah 3:12–15.

"The work of warning sinners, of weeping over them and pleading with them, has been neglected until many souls are past all cure. Some have died in their sins, and will in the judgment confront with reproaches of their guilt those who might have saved them, but who did not."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 506.

"All who will can be overcomers. Let us strive earnestly to reach the standard set before us. Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 974.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What challenges did the sons of Zilpah face from birth?
2. Contrast the carnal Gadites with the converted ones.
3. Differentiate between the good and evil aspects of Asherites.
4. Consider practical ways to restore backsliders whom you may know.
5. Why do you think God promises sufficient strength for each and every day?

Issachar

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

“Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 32.

Suggested Readings: *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 114.
Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 305–309.

Sunday

August 12

1. JACOB’S NINTH SON

- a. Relate the circumstances associated with the birth of Jacob and Leah’s fifth son. Genesis 30:17, 18. What qualities are found in the nature of the animal which Jacob used to illustrate the character of his son? Genesis 49:14. What appeal is made in behalf of burden bearing?

“Someone must advance; someone must venture in the fear of God, trusting the result with Him. Those ministers who shun this part of the labor are losing much. They are failing to obtain that experience which God designed they should have to make them strong, efficient men that can be relied upon in any emergency.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 14.

- b. How did Jacob commend Issachar’s willingness to bear burdens? Genesis 49:15. What lessons from Issachar can be incorporated into the work of God today?

“When an emergency arises, and help is needed, no worker should say, That is not my work. The helper who has the idea that he is only to do the work assigned him, and no more, who feels no responsibility to help wherever and whenever help is needed, should at once dismiss this idea from his mind. He should never feel that a wrong is done him if in an emergency he is asked to work overtime. When extra help is needed, let the workers assist willingly, in Christian meekness, and they will receive a blessing.”—*Medical Ministry*, pp. 176, 177.

Monday

August 13

2. BEARING DOUBLE BURDENS

- a. Give an example which reveals how the tribe of Issachar came to the assistance of others. Judges 5:15.

- b. Name some personal benefits derived from helping our fellow-men. Mark 12:31; Galatians 6:2.

“The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 32.

- c. What ability did some of the members of the tribe of Issachar reveal, and when? 1 Chronicles 12:32.

- d. How should God’s people today reveal a similar understanding of the present signs of the times? 1 Corinthians 16:13, 14.

“The solemn, sacred truth—the testing message given us of God to communicate to the world—lays every one of us under the strongest obligation to so transform our daily life and character that the power of the truth may be well represented. We should have a continual sense of the shortness of time and of the fearful events which prophecy has declared must speedily take place.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 612.

“The church of God is required to fulfill her night watch, however perilous, whether long or short. Sorrow is no excuse for her to be less watchful. Tribulation should not lead to carelessness, but to double vigilance. Christ has directed the church by His own example to the Source of their strength in times of need, distress, and peril. The attitude of watching is to designate the church as God’s people indeed. By this sign the waiting ones are distinguished from the world and show that they are pilgrims and strangers upon the earth.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 205.

3. A CHECKERED HISTORY

- a. Relate the sad history when one member of the tribe of Issachar ruled over Israel. 1 Kings 15:25–34; 16:1–5.
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- b. What infamous tragedy took place within the territory of Issachar? (See the mountains near Jezreel on a Bible map which labels the area of each tribe.) 1 Samuel 28:7; 1 Chronicles 10:13, 14.
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“Under the cover of darkness Saul and his attendants made their way across the plain, and, safely passing the Philistine host, they crossed the mountain ridge, to the lonely home of the sorceress of Endor. Here the woman with a familiar spirit had hidden herself away that she might secretly continue her profane incantations.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 679.

- c. How should God’s people today be encouraged by another record of some members of the tribe of Issachar? 1 Chronicles 7:1, 5.
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“Where are the missionaries who should be raised up at the heart of the work? . . . But piety is at so low an ebb, the spirit of devotion is so weak, worldliness and selfishness so prevalent, that the moral atmosphere begets a lethargy fatal to missionary zeal. . . .

“Shake off your spiritual lethargy. Work with all your might to save your own souls and the souls of others. It is no time now to cry, ‘Peace and safety.’ It is not silver-tongued orators that are needed to give this message. The truth in all its pointed severity must be spoken. Men of action are needed—men who will labor with earnest, ceaseless energy for the purifying of the church and the warning of the world.

“A great work is to be accomplished; broader plans must be laid; a voice must go forth to arouse the nations. Men whose faith is weak and wavering are not the ones to carry forward the work at this important crisis. We need the courage of heroes and the faith of martyrs.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 187.

4. A REPUTATION FOR SERVICE

- a. Name one individual in the land of Issachar who distinguished herself for her kindness. 2 Kings 4:8–10.
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“The kindly spirit that enabled Elisha to exert a powerful influence over the lives of many in Israel is revealed in the story of his friendly relations with a family dwelling at Shunem. In his journeyings to and fro throughout the kingdom ‘it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. . . .’ (2 Kings 4:8). To this retreat Elisha often came, thankful for its quiet peace. Nor was God unmindful of the woman’s kindness.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 237.

- b. Explain some ways in which efforts toward self-denying service are rewarded. 2 Kings 4:12–20, 32–37; Matthew 25:40.
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“Our work in this world is to live for others’ good, to bless others, to be hospitable; and frequently it may be only at some inconvenience that we can entertain those who really need our care and the benefit of our society and our homes. Some avoid these necessary burdens. But someone must bear them; and because the brethren in general are not lovers of hospitality, and do not share equally in these Christian duties, a few who have willing hearts, and who cheerfully make the cases of those who need help their own, are burdened. A church should take special care to relieve its ministers of extra burdens in this direction.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 645.

“As you regard your eternal interest, arouse yourselves, and begin to sow good seed. That which you sow, you shall also reap. The harvest is coming—the great reaping time, when we shall reap what we have sown. There will be no failure in the crop; the harvest is sure. Now is the sowing time. . . . Encourage in yourselves a love of hospitality, a love to help those who need help.”—*Ibid.*, p. 31.

“When hearts sympathize with hearts burdened with discouragement and grief, when the hand dispenses to the needy, when the naked are clothed, the stranger made welcome to a seat in your parlor and a place in your heart, angels are coming very near, and an answering strain is responded to in heaven. Every act of justice, mercy, and benevolence makes melody in heaven.”—*Ibid.*, p. 25.

5. REFORMATION

- a. Although the tribe of Issachar had joined in Israel's general departure from the true worship of God, how did they share in a desire for reformation? 2 Chronicles 30:17–20. Show how God's mercy is extended toward repentant sinners.

"Throughout the period of probationary time [God's] Spirit is entreating men to accept the gift of life. 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?' (Ezekiel 33:11). It is Satan's special device to lead man into sin and then leave him there, helpless and hopeless, fearing to seek for pardon. But God invites, 'Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me' (Isaiah 27:5). In Christ every provision has been made, every encouragement offered."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 325, 326.

- b. What is the blessed result of true repentance and reformation of even the weakest souls identified with the tribe of Issachar? Revelation 7:7 (last part).

"Dullness and ignorance are no virtue. You can choose to become stereotyped in a wrong course of action because you have not the determination to take yourselves in hand and to reform, or you may cultivate your powers to do the very best kind of service, and then you will find yourselves in demand anywhere and everywhere. You will be appreciated for all that you are worth."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 316.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why may some persons tend to be frustrated by the Issacharites?
2. Why should the Issacharites be appreciated more than they are?
3. Name some points of interest in the history of Issachar.
4. Consider ways in which you and your local church can improve on the exercise of hospitality.
5. How can the Issacharites overcome their weaknesses?

Zebulun

"Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the field" (Judges 5:18).

"For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled. At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 196.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 150–152.
The Desire of Ages, pp. 236–243.

1. WHERE TO DWELL?

- a. With what hope did Leah bear Jacob's sixth son? Genesis 30:20.
- b. According to the prophecies of Jacob and Moses, where would Zebulun dwell? Genesis 49:13; Deuteronomy 33:18, 19. What work is to be done near seaports and similar areas of intense activity and commercial interest?

"Into the busy world, filled with the din of commerce and the altercation of trade, where men were trying selfishly to get all they could for self, Christ came; and above the confusion, His voice, like the trump of God, was heard: 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'"—*Evangelism*, p. 559.

"Most generally the fashionable, the wealthy, the proud, understand by experience that happiness is not to be secured by the amount of money that they possess, or by costly edifices, and ornamental furniture and pictures. They want something they have not. But this class are attracted toward each other, and it is hard to find access to them; and because of this many are perishing in their sins who long for something that will give them rest and peace and quietude of mind. They need Jesus, the light of righteousness."—*Ibid.*, p. 556.

"There are promising opportunities for labor in connection with the health resorts. Our ministers and canvassers should be on the ground, watching their chance to present the message, and holding meetings as they have opportunity."—*Ibid.*, p. 406.

2. ABILITY AND COURAGE

- a. What description did the prophetess Deborah give to pinpoint one specific gift of some members of the tribe of Zebulun? Judges 5:14 (last part). Why is the ability to “handle the pen of the writer” particularly important in these last days?

“Let more time be given to the publication and circulation of books containing present truth. Call attention to books dwelling on practical faith and godliness and to those that treat on the prophetic word. The people are to be educated to read the sure word of prophecy in the light of the living oracles. They need to know that the signs of the times are fulfilling.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 158.

“Let all have more to teach, to write, and to publish in regard to those things that are now to be fulfilled, and that concern the eternal welfare of souls.”—*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 13.

“Very much more can be accomplished by the living preacher with the circulation of papers and tracts than by the preaching of the word alone without the publications. The press is a powerful instrumentality which God has ordained to be combined with the energies of the living preacher to bring the truth before all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples. Many minds can be reached in no other way.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 4, 1875.

- b. Why can we be inspired by the character reference made about the tribe of Zebulun? Judges 5:18. What kind of people are needed today to finish God’s work?

“[God’s messengers] are to go forward in faith, remembering that they are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. They are not to speak their own words, but words which One greater than the potentates of earth has bidden them speak. Their message is to be, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ God calls for men like Elijah, Nathan, and John the Baptist—men who will bear His message with faithfulness, regardless of the consequences; men who will speak the truth bravely, though it call for the sacrifice of all they have.

“God cannot use men who, in time of peril, when the strength, courage, and influence of all are needed, are afraid to take a firm stand for the right. He calls for men who will do faithful battle against wrong, warring against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 142.

3. MOTIVATED BY LOVE

- a. What should we learn from the self-sacrificing spirit of the tribe of Zebulun? Judges 5:19; 1 Peter 5:2.

“It is not sufficient to lay money alone upon the altar. God calls for men, volunteers, to carry the truth to other nations and tongues and people. It is not our numbers nor our wealth that will give us a signal victory; but it is devotion to the work, moral courage, ardent love for souls, and untiring, unflagging zeal.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 404.

“Why is there not a more earnest call for volunteers to enter the whitening harvest field?”—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 35.

- b. Give an example in which wholehearted courage was manifested by the tribe of Zebulun. 1 Chronicles 12:23, 33.

- c. What is the warning given against double-mindedness? James 1:8.

“Those who begin their Christian life by being half and half, will at last be found enlisted on the enemy’s side, whatever may have been their first intentions. And to be an apostate, a traitor to the cause of God, is more serious than death; for it means the loss of eternal life.

“Double-minded men and women are Satan’s best allies. Whatever favorable opinion they may have of themselves, they are dissemblers. All who are loyal to God and the truth must stand firmly for the right because it is right. To yoke up with those who are unconsecrated, and yet be loyal to the truth, is simply impossible. We cannot unite with those who are serving themselves, who are working on worldly plans, and not lose our connection with the heavenly Counselor. We may recover ourselves from the snare of the enemy, but we are bruised and wounded, and our experience is dwarfed.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1086.

“If our brethren will now consecrate themselves unreservedly to God, He will accept them. He will give them a transformation of mind, that they may be saviors of life unto life. Wake up, brethren and sisters, that you may attain to your high calling through Christ Jesus our Lord.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 166.

4. A SPECIAL HONOR

- a. What glorious honor was to be bestowed upon the dwelling place of Zebulun and Naphtali? Isaiah 9:1, 2.

- b. How was this prophecy fulfilled? Matthew 4:13–17.

“At Capernaum Jesus dwelt in the intervals of His journeys to and fro, and it came to be known as ‘His own city.’ It was on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and near the borders of the beautiful plain of Gennesaret, if not actually upon it. . . .

“Capernaum itself was well adapted to be the center of the Saviour’s work. Being on the highway from Damascus to Jerusalem and Egypt, and to the Mediterranean Sea, it was a great thoroughfare of travel. People from many lands passed through the city, or tarried for rest in their journeyings to and fro. Here Jesus could meet all nations and all ranks, the rich and great as well as the poor and lowly, and His lessons would be carried to other countries and into many households. Investigation of the prophecies would thus be excited, attention would be directed to the Saviour, and His mission would be brought before the world.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 252, 253.

- c. How can we see the same “great light”? John 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:6.

“Let your heart break for the longing it has for God, for the living God. The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised.

“Let the glorious conceptions of God possess your mind. Let your life be knit by hidden links to the life of Jesus. He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness is willing to shine in your heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will take the things of God and show them unto you, conveying them as a living power into the obedient heart. Christ will lead you to the threshold of the Infinite. You may behold the glory beyond the veil, and reveal to men the sufficiency of Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 149.

5. SANCTIFICATION NEEDED

- a. What is the evidence that a remnant spiritually identified with the tribe of Zebulun will be wholehearted in repentance toward God? Revelation 7:8 (first part).

- b. What victorious experience is within the reach of every sinner who is willing to find repentance? 1 John 1:9; James 4:8–10.

“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.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What opportunities are available in coastal centers?
2. Why can literature be a tool of every church member?
3. How can we cultivate more of a spirit of sacrifice?
4. Relate some of Jesus’ experiences in Nazareth and Capernaum.
5. Name some key factors in true repentance.

First Sabbath Offering for Martinique



The island of Martinique is an overseas department of France located in the eastern Caribbean Sea. As a possession of France, Martinique is part of the European Union and uses the Euro as its currency.

The first European settlement was made on the island in 1635 by the Frenchman Pierre Belan d'Esnameuc. There is a diverse population of Indians and Chinese that were brought to work the plantations after slavery was banned in 1848.

The message of Reformation came to Martinique in the second half of the last century. Administratively the island is in the same Field Conference as Guadeloupe, another overseas department of France in the eastern Caribbean.

The population of about half a million is predominantly Roman Catholic (85%) with a large Protestant minority (10.5%). There are also Muslim and Hindu communities (each about 0.5%).

The excellent tropical climate has made the island a tourist haven, especially for Europeans. It also means that the church here has been the first point of contact for the truth to many persons from around the world. In addition the brethren and sisters from Martinique have a unique opportunity to assist with the spreading of the message in surrounding islands.

What is most needed at this time is a proper headquarters for the work in Martinique. Your assistance is greatly appreciated and we thank you in advance.

The Martinique Field Committee

Joseph

“Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great” (Psalm 18:35).

“One day’s experience had been the turning point in Joseph’s life. Its terrible calamity had transformed him from a petted child to a man, thoughtful, courageous, and self-possessed.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 214.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 209–223.
Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 219, 220.

Sunday

August 26

1. LOVED AND HATED

- a. **Relate the history concerning Jacob and Rachel’s first son. Genesis 30:22–24.**

“Pure, active, and joyous, the [young Joseph] gave evidence also of moral earnestness and firmness. He listened to his father’s instructions, and loved to obey God. The qualities that afterward distinguished him in Egypt—gentleness, fidelity, and truthfulness—were already manifest in his daily life. His mother being dead, his affections clung the more closely to the father, and Jacob’s heart was bound up in this child of his old age. He ‘loved Joseph more than all his children.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 209.

- b. **What main events characterized the first seventeen years of Joseph’s life? Genesis 37:1–11.**

“As [Joseph] stood before his brothers, his beautiful countenance lighted up with the Spirit of inspiration, they could not withhold their admiration; but they did not choose to renounce their evil ways, and they hated the purity that reproveth their sins. The same spirit that actuated Cain was kindling in their hearts.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 210.

2. COURAGE FROM CRISIS

- a. Relate the traumatic event of Joseph's young manhood. Genesis 37:13, 14, 23–28.

“[Joseph] was seized and his coat stripped from him. Taunts and threats revealed a deadly purpose. His entreaties were unheeded. He was wholly in the power of those maddened men. Rudely dragging him to a deep pit, [his brothers] thrust him in, and having made sure that there was no possibility of his escape, they left him there to perish from hunger, while they ‘sat down to eat bread.’ . . .

“As he saw the merchants the dreadful truth flashed upon him. To become a slave was a fate more to be feared than death. In an agony of terror he appealed to one and another of his brothers, but in vain. Some were moved with pity, but fear of derision kept them silent; all felt that they had now gone too far to retreat. If Joseph were spared, he would doubtless report them to the father, who would not overlook their cruelty toward his favorite son.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 211, 212.

- b. In his sudden change of circumstances from favored son to slave, what firm decision did Joseph adopt? Genesis 39:1–3.

“[Joseph] had learned in a few hours that which years might not otherwise have taught him. His father, strong and tender as his love had been, had done him wrong by his partiality and indulgence. This unwise preference had angered his brothers and provoked them to the cruel deed that had separated him from his home. Its effects were manifest also in his own character. Faults had been encouraged that were now to be corrected. He was becoming self-sufficient and exacting. Accustomed to the tenderness of his father's care, he felt that he was unprepared to cope with the difficulties before him, in the bitter, uncared-for life of a stranger and a slave. . . .

“Joseph believed that the God of his fathers would be his God. He then and there gave himself fully to the Lord, and he prayed that the Keeper of Israel would be with him in the land of his exile.

“His soul thrilled with the high resolve to prove himself true to God—under all circumstances to act as became a subject of the King of heaven. He would serve the Lord with undivided heart; he would meet the trials of his lot with fortitude and perform every duty with fidelity.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 213, 214.

3. THE YEARS OF SEPARATION

- a. What can we learn from the way Joseph stood firm for righteousness' sake? Genesis 39:4–12.

“If we were to cherish an habitual impression that God sees and hears all that we do and say and keeps a faithful record of our words and actions, and that we must meet it all, we would fear to sin. Let the young ever remember that wherever they are, and whatever they do, they are in the presence of God. No part of our conduct escapes observation. We cannot hide our ways from the Most High. Human laws, though sometimes severe, are often transgressed without detection, and hence with impunity. But not so with the law of God. The deepest midnight is no cover for the guilty one. He may think himself alone, but to every deed there is an unseen witness. The very motives of his heart are open to divine inspection. Every act, every word, every thought, is as distinctly marked as though there were only one person in the whole world, and the attention of heaven were centered upon him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 217, 218.

- b. How does Inspiration summarize the dealings of God with His servant Joseph? Genesis 39:13, 14, 19–23; Psalm 105:16–22.

“Joseph suffered for his integrity, for his tempter revenged herself by accusing him of a foul crime, and causing him to be thrust into prison. Had Potiphar believed his wife's charge against Joseph, the young Hebrew would have lost his life; but the modesty and uprightness that had uniformly characterized his conduct were proof of his innocence; and yet, to save the reputation of his master's house, he was abandoned to disgrace and bondage.

“At the first Joseph was treated with great severity by his jailers. The psalmist says, ‘His feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in chains of iron: until the time that his word came to pass; the word of the Lord tried him’ (Psalm 105:18, 19, RV) But Joseph's real character shines out, even in the darkness of the dungeon. He held fast his faith and patience; his years of faithful service had been most cruelly repaid, yet this did not render him morose or distrustful. He had the peace that comes from conscious innocence, and he trusted his case with God. He did not brood upon his own wrongs, but forgot his sorrow in trying to lighten the sorrows of others.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 218.

4. THROUGH FAMINE AND PLENTY

- a. What illustrates the need for humble stability of Christian character both in times of prosperity as well as in times of trouble? Genesis 41:41–44; Philippians 4:11, 12.

“The joy of Christ is a pure, unalloyed cheerfulness. It is not a cheap gaiety that leads to vanity of words or lightness of conduct. No, we are to have His joy, and His greatest joy was to see men obeying the truth. . . . Plead with God, saying, ‘I make an entire surrender. I give myself away to Thee.’ Then be joyful. The Word is in you, purifying and cleansing your character. God does not want His children to go about with anxiety and sorrow expressed in their faces. He wants the lovely expression of His countenance to be revealed in every one of us who are partakers of the divine nature, for we have power to escape the corruptions of the world.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 148.

- b. As Joseph matured, how did he look back on the primary trial of his youth and manifest exemplary Christian forgiveness toward his brethren? Genesis 45:4–8; 50:19–21.

“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. . . . 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. . . . 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. . . .

“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.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 239, 240.

5. A DOUBLE PORTION BESTOWED

- a. What did Jacob prophesy about Joseph in bestowing upon him the double portion of the inheritance? Genesis 49:22–26; 1 Chronicles 5:1.

“One of the birthright privileges, which Reuben had forfeited, was to fall to Joseph—a double portion in Israel.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 234.

“The dying Jacob, under the Spirit of inspiration, had said of his best-loved son, ‘Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall.’ And he said, ‘The God of thy Father’ ‘shall help thee,’ the Almighty ‘shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under’ (Genesis 49:22, 25).”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 214.

- b. How did Moses reiterate the blessing upon the tribe of Joseph? Deuteronomy 33:13–17.

- c. How should we be inspired by the “double portion” inheritance for Joseph, enabling his son also to share in the special blessing? Revelation 7:6 (last part), 8 (middle part).

“Christianity is a religion of progress. . . . The cause of God may hold its ground only by great exertion and continual sacrifice, yet it will triumph finally.

“The word is: Go forward; discharge your individual duty, and leave all consequences in the hands of God. If we move forward where Jesus leads the way we shall see His triumph, we shall share His joy. We must share the conflicts if we wear the crown of victory. Like Jesus, we must be made perfect through suffering.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 71.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe the early life of Joseph.
2. How did Joseph make his father’s religion his own?
3. What was Joseph’s focus of attention in prison?
4. In what ways does the life of Joseph parallel the life of Christ?
5. Explain the connection between the cross and the crown.

Benjamin

“Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil” (Genesis 49:27).

“Whatever may be man’s besetting sin, whatever bitter or baleful passions struggle for the mastery, he may conquer, if he will watch and war against them in the name and strength of Israel’s Helper.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1017.

Suggested Readings: Judges, chapters 19–21.
Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 200–205.

Sunday

September 2

1. ORPHANED AND CODDLED

- a. Explain the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jacob and Rachel’s second son. Genesis 35:16–19.

- b. What evidence do we have of the tender regard of Jacob toward this motherless boy? Genesis 42:36–38. Explain what may easily happen when one child in a family is especially favored or coddled.

“In many families the seeds of vanity and selfishness are sown in the hearts of the children almost during babyhood. Their cunning little sayings and doings are commented upon and praised in their presence, and repeated with exaggerations to others. The little ones take note of this and swell with self-importance; they presume to interrupt conversations, and become forward and impudent. Flattery and indulgence foster their vanity and willfulness, until the youngest not unfrequently rules the whole family, father and mother included.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 200, 201.

Monday

September 3

2. MAJOR CHARACTER FLAWS

- a. With what illustration did Jacob depict the nature of Benjamin? Genesis 49:27. What warning should we take from the words of Jacob?

“Children who are allowed to have their own way are not happy. The unsubdued heart has not within itself the elements of rest and contentment. The mind and heart must be disciplined and brought under proper restraint in order for the character to harmonize with the wise laws that govern our being. Restlessness and discontent are the fruits of indulgence and selfishness. The soil of the heart, like that of a garden, will produce weeds and brambles unless the seeds of precious flowers are planted there and receive care and cultivation. As in visible nature, so is it with the human soul.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 202, 203.

“If such persons have families of their own, they become arbitrary rulers at home and display there the selfish and unreasonable disposition they are forced to partially conceal from the outside world. Their dependents feel to the utmost all the faults of their early training. Why will parents educate their children in such a manner that they will be at war with those who are brought in contact with them?

“Their religious experience is molded by the education received in childhood. The sad trials, which prove so dangerous to the prosperity of a church, and which cause the unbelieving to stumble and turn away with doubt and dissatisfaction, usually arise from an unsubdued and rebellious spirit, the offspring of parental indulgence in early youth. How many lives are wrecked, how many crimes are committed, under the influence of a quick-rising passion that might have been checked in childhood, when the mind was impressible, when the heart was easily influenced for right, and was subject to a fond mother’s will. Inefficient training of children lies at the foundation of a vast amount of moral wretchedness.”—*Ibid.*, p. 202.

- b. Relate one experience which reveals the cruelty and arrogant belligerence found in the posterity of Benjamin. Judges 20:4, 5, 12–14, 23, 46.

- c. What did the men of Israel feel compelled to vow regarding the Benjamites, and why only did they relent? Judges 21:1–4, 13–15.

3. MEEKNESS PREFERABLE TO TALENT

- a. Describe the natural talent of skillful precision possessed by some members of the tribe of Benjamin. Judges 20:15, 16; 1 Chronicles 8:40; 12:1, 2.
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- b. What should talented persons realize, especially in these last days? 1 Samuel 2:3; 1 Corinthians 8:1 (last part)–3; 1 John 4:20, 21.
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“It is a dangerous age for any man who has talents which can be of value in the work of God; for Satan is constantly plying his temptations upon such a person, ever trying to fill him with pride and ambition; and when God would use him, in nine cases out of ten he becomes independent, self-sufficient, and feels capable of standing alone.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 367.

“If those who are now riding upon the wave of popularity do not become giddy, it will be a miracle of mercy. If they lean to their own wisdom, as so many thus situated have done, their wisdom will prove to be foolishness. But while they shall give themselves unselfishly to the work of God, never swerving in the least from principle, the Lord will throw about them the everlasting arm and will prove to them a mighty helper. ‘Them that honor Me, I will honor’ (1 Samuel 2:30).” —*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 538.

“There is in the natural heart a tendency to be exalted or puffed up if success attends the efforts put forth. But self-exaltation can find no place in the work of God. Whatever your intelligence, however earnestly and zealously you may labor, unless you put away your own tendencies to pride, and submit to be guided by the Spirit of God, you will be on losing ground.

“Spiritual death in the soul is evidenced by spiritual pride and a crippled experience; those who have such an experience seldom make straight paths for their feet. If pride is nourished, the very qualities of the mind which grace, if received, would make a blessing, become contaminated. The very victories which would have been a savor of life unto life, if the glory had been given to God, become tarnished by self-glory. These may seem to be little things, unworthy of notice, but the seed thus scattered brings forth a sure harvest. It is these little sins, so common that they are often unnoticed, that Satan uses in his service.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1080.

4. TWO SAULS

- a. How did the decisions and actions of Saul the king—a Benjamite—lead to spiritual degeneracy? 1 Samuel 9:17, 21; 10:1, 9; 15:16–23, 28; 18:11. Explain how God’s attempts to arrest his downward course and help him overcome apply also in our day.
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“There are many whom [God] has called to positions in His work for the same reason that He called Saul—because they are little in their own sight, because they have a humble and teachable spirit. In His providence He places them where they may learn of Him. To all who will receive instruction He will impart grace and wisdom. It is His purpose to bring them into so close connection with Himself that Satan shall have no opportunity to pervert their judgment or overpower their conscience. He will reveal to them their defects of character, and bestow upon all who seek His aid, strength to correct their errors. . . . The children of God should cultivate a keen sensitiveness to sin. Here, as well as elsewhere, we should not despise the day of small things. It is one of Satan’s most successful devices, to lead men to the commission of little sins, to blind the mind to the danger of little indulgences, little digressions from the plainly stated requirements of God. Many who would shrink with horror from some great transgression, are led to look upon sin in little matters as of trifling consequence. But these little sins eat out the life of godliness in the soul. The feet which enter upon a path diverging from the right way are tending toward the broad road that ends in death. When once a retrograde movement begins, no one can tell where it may end. . . .

“We must learn to distrust self and to rely wholly upon God for guidance and support, for a knowledge of His will, and for strength to perform it.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1017.

- b. How was the character of Saul, a Benjamite of the New Testament era, miraculously transformed? Acts 8:3; 9:1–6. Relate the personal testimony of Saul (who was later called Paul) concerning his change of heart. Philippians 3:4–7.
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“By beholding the matchless love of Christ, the selfish heart will be melted and subdued.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 394.

5. A MESSAGE OF HOPE

- a. With what words did Moses prophesy that there would be a decided change in the character of many Benjamites? Deuteronomy 33:12. Give an example of how the presence of a Benjamite brought safety to God's people in Persia. Esther 2:5; 3:13; 4:1-3; 8:7, 8, 15-17.

"Mordecai was given the position of honor formerly occupied by Haman. He 'was next unto King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren' (Esther 10:3); and he sought to promote the welfare of Israel."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 602.

- b. How do we know that 12,000 last-day spiritual Benjamites are to be total overcomers? Revelation 7:8 (last part). Due to the character transformation of this remnant, what glorious sight adds poignant symbolism on the earth made new? Isaiah 65:25.

"There are those who listen to the truth, and are convinced that they have been living in opposition to Christ. They are condemned, and they repent of their transgressions. Relying upon the merits of Christ, exercising true faith in Him, they receive pardon for sin. As they cease to do evil and learn to do well, they grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. They see that they must sacrifice in order to separate from the world; and, after counting the cost, they look upon all as loss if they may but win Christ. They have enlisted in Christ's army. The warfare is before them, and they enter it bravely and cheerfully, fighting against their natural inclinations and selfish desires, bringing the will into subjection to the will of Christ. Daily they seek the Lord for grace to obey Him, and they are strengthened and helped. This is true conversion."—*Messages to Young People*, pp. 73, 74.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What point should fond parents and teachers carefully consider?
2. Explain how one's early childhood can affect future generations.
3. Cite the inherent risks which accompany extraordinary talent.
4. Describe God's process in strengthening men to overcome.
5. What is true conversion?

An Opportunity Slighted

"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hosea 4:17).

"If your nature is not transformed, if you are not refined and elevated by the sanctifying truth for these last days, you will be found unworthy of a place among the pure and holy angels."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 258.

Suggested Readings: *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 212-218.
Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 89-94.

1. INCORPORATED INTO ISRAEL

- a. What did Joseph do when he heard about the illness of his aged father? Genesis 48:1, 2. How did Jacob describe to Joseph his blessed experience with the Lord? Genesis 48:3, 4.
- b. What did Jacob declare concerning Ephraim and Manasseh? Genesis 48:5. How did he depict their future? Genesis 48:9, 13-20.

"The sons of Joseph were to be formally instated among the children of Israel. 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. . . .

"[Genesis 48:5 quoted.] They were to be adopted as [Jacob's] own, and to become the heads of separate tribes. Thus one of the birthright privileges, which Reuben had forfeited, was to fall to Joseph—a double portion in Israel."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 234.

2. EPHRAIM GIVEN PREEMINENCE

- a. What did Moses predict about the predominance of the tribe of Ephraim? Deuteronomy 33:17 (last part).
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- b. How do we know that mere numbers have never indicated spiritual prosperity either among the Ephraimites or among God's people in general? Hosea 9:11–13.
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“Those to whom the message of truth is spoken seldom ask, ‘Is it true?’ but, ‘By whom is it advocated?’ Multitudes estimate it by the numbers who accept it; and the question is still asked, ‘Have any of the learned men or religious leaders believed?’ Men are no more favorable to real godliness now than in the days of Christ. They are just as intently seeking earthly good, to the neglect of eternal riches; and it is not an argument against the truth, that large numbers are not ready to accept it, or that it is not received by the world's great men, or even by the religious leaders.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 459, 460.

“Not in our learning, not in our position, not in our numbers or entrusted talents, not in the will of man, is to be found the secret of success. Feeling our inefficiency we are to contemplate Christ, and through Him who is the strength of all strength, the thought of all thought, the willing and obedient will gain victory after victory.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 404.

- c. How and when did envy on the part of the Ephraimites almost cause a war? Judges 7:24, 25; 8:1–3.
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- d. What evidences do we have that God wanted the tribe of Ephraim to change their nature? Jeremiah 31:20; Isaiah 11:13. How are we warned against the danger of cherishing envy and jealousy?
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“Never can the love of Jesus be received and shed abroad in the heart until envious feelings, hatred, jealousies, and evil surmisings are put away. . . . God considers more with how much love we work, than the amount we do.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 49.

3. A FATAL CHARACTERISTIC

- a. How did the petty jealousy of Jeroboam, a member of the tribe of Ephraim, spoil a chance for reformation among the Israelites and lead to further spiritual decay? 1 Kings 11:29–38; 12:25–33.
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“Jeroboam, the former servant of Solomon, was in a position to bring about wise reforms in both civil and religious affairs. Under the rulership of Solomon he had shown aptitude and sound judgment; and the knowledge he had gained during years of faithful service fitted him to rule with discretion. But Jeroboam failed to make God his trust. Jeroboam's greatest fear was that at some future time the hearts of his subjects might be won over by the ruler occupying the throne of David. . . .

“So strong was Jeroboam's desire to keep the ten tribes away from Jerusalem that he lost sight of the fundamental weakness of his plan. He failed to take into consideration the great peril to which he was exposing the Israelites by setting before them the idolatrous symbol of the deity with which their ancestors had been so familiar during the centuries of Egyptian bondage.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 99, 100.

- b. How does God consider envy? Job 5:2; Proverbs 27:4; 14:30.
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“Envy is not merely a perverseness of temper, but a distemper, which disorders all the faculties. It began with Satan. He desired to be first in heaven, and because he could not have all the power and glory he sought, he rebelled against the government of God. He envied our first parents and tempted them to sin and thus ruined them and all the human race.

“The envious man shuts his eyes to the good qualities and noble deeds of others. He is always ready to disparage and misrepresent that which is excellent. Men often confess and forsake other faults, but there is little to be hoped for from the envious man. Since to envy a person is to admit that he is a superior, pride will not permit any concession. If an attempt be made to convince the envious person of his sin, he becomes even more bitter against the object of his passion, and too often he remains incurable. . . .

“He seeks to be thought best and greatest, not by putting forth heroic, self-denying efforts to reach the goal of excellence himself, but by standing where he is and diminishing the merit due to the efforts of others.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 56.

4. ETERNAL LOSS

- a. How does the Lord depict the persistent mingling of Ephraim with heathenism? Hosea 7:8–16.
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- b. Describe His pleadings in behalf of apostate Ephraim. Hosea 11:3–9, 12 (first part).
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“[Hosea 7:9 quoted.] . . . Some of the leaders in Israel felt keenly their loss of prestige and wished that this might be regained. But instead of turning away from those practices which had brought weakness to the kingdom, they continued in iniquity, flattering themselves that when occasion arose, they would attain to the political power they desired by allying themselves with the heathen.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 280.

- c. Why is the tribe of Ephraim not included among the names of the 144,000 sealed saints? Psalm 78:9–11; Hosea 8:9, 11–13; 4:17. How does God work in behalf of nominal believers who exhibit the character of the Ephraimites?
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“God calls upon you, Brother G, to repent and be converted, and become as a little child. Unless the truth has a sanctifying influence upon your life to mold your character, you will fail of an inheritance in the kingdom of God. . . . Brother G, you were raised up in answer to prayer, and God gave you a new lease of life; but you have let jealousy and envy into your soul, and have greatly displeased Him. He designed to bring you where you would develop character, where you would see and correct your defects.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 91, 92.

“It is all that Brother C can do, in the weakness of his nature, to guard his *own* soul and close every avenue whereby Satan can gain access to insinuate doubts in regard to others. He is in great danger of losing his soul by failing to perfect Christian character during probationary time. He is slow to follow Christ. His senses seem to be clouded and almost paralyzed so that he does not place a proper estimate upon sacred things. He may even now correct his errors and overcome his defects, if he will work in the strength of God.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 39, 40. [Italics in the original.]

5. A WARNING TO US

- a. What solemn warning is given especially for these last days? Isaiah 2:10–12, 17–22. How may each of us be in danger of following in the footsteps of Ephraim? Luke 16:13; 13:6–9.
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“The warning sounds down along the line to us in this generation. Are you, O careless heart, a fruitless tree in the Lord’s vineyard? Shall the words of doom ere long be spoken of you? How long have you received His gifts? How long has He watched and waited for a return of love? Planted in His vineyard, under the watchful care of the gardener, what privileges are yours! How often has the tender gospel message thrilled your heart! You have taken the name of Christ, you are outwardly a member of the church which is His body, and yet you are conscious of no living connection with the great heart of love. The tide of His life does not flow through you. The sweet graces of His character, ‘the fruits of the Spirit,’ are not seen in your life. . . .

“Yet in His great mercy God has not cut you down. He does not look coldly upon you. He does not turn away with indifference, or leave you to destruction. Looking upon you He cries, as He cried so many centuries ago concerning Israel, ‘How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?’ (Hosea 11:8).”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 216–218.

- b. What hope does God extend to souls who, by His grace, overcome the sins of idolatry and envy? James 4:4–7; Titus 3:3–7.
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“Make thorough work with your own soul, to right every wrong there, and make every effort to master self, lest you miss heaven. This you cannot afford to do. For Christ’s sake, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 93, 94.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what way were Ephraim and Manasseh offered a special chance?
2. How do we know that God’s favor depends not upon large numbers?
3. To what did Jeroboam’s envy lead?
4. Explain why envy is such a serious problem.
5. Describe the only process of hope for the spiritual Ephraimites today.

An Opportunity Treasured

“[The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh] cried to God in the battle, and he was entreated of them; because they put their trust in him” (1 Chronicles 5:20).

“The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 43.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 263–268.
Christ’s Object Lessons, pp. 296–299, 305, 306.

Sunday

September 16

1. PRIZING THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT

- a. **What blessing did Jacob pronounce upon Ephraim and Manasseh? Genesis 48:14–16. How can both young and old obtain similar blessings today?**

“You should feel an earnest desire for the Holy Spirit and should pray earnestly to obtain it. You cannot expect the blessing of God without seeking for it. If you used the means within your reach you would experience a growth in grace and would rise to a higher life.

“It is not natural for you to love spiritual things; but you can acquire that love by exercising your mind, the strength of your being, in that direction.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 263.

- b. **How did some from the tribe of Manasseh respond to calls for reformation on various occasions? Judges 6:11–15, 25–29; 2 Chronicles 15:1, 2, 8, 9; 30:1, 10, 11. What can we learn from these events?**

“We all need to draw near to God. He will draw near to those who approach Him in humility, filled with a holy awe for His sacred majesty, and standing before Him separate from the world.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1136.

Monday

September 17

2. SEIZE THE CHANCE

- a. **How is our opportunity to be among the 144,000 spiritual Israelites similar to the privilege extended to the sons of Joseph to become direct sons of Israel? Romans 11:13, 17, 19–21.**

- b. **What should be our attitude regarding this opportunity? Romans 11:18, 22–25.**

“Some feel their need of the atonement, and with the recognition of this need, and the desire for a change of heart, a struggle begins. To renounce their own will, perhaps their chosen objects of affection or pursuit, requires an effort, at which many hesitate and falter and turn back. Yet this battle must be fought by every heart that is truly converted. We must war against temptations without and within. We must gain the victory over self, crucify the affections and lusts; and then begins the union of the soul with Christ. As the dry and apparently lifeless branch is grafted into the living tree, so may we become living branches of the True Vine.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 47.

- c. **Realizing that the tribe of Dan was cut off for indulging in backbiting, envy, and jealousy—and Ephraim ultimately rejected the chance to step in—what should each of us consider? Hosea 4:6; Revelation 3:11, 16.**

“The words of God to ancient Israel have a solemn warning to the church and its leaders today. Of Israel the Lord said, ‘I have written to him the great things of My law; but they were counted as a strange thing’ (Hosea 8:12). . . .

“Shall the warnings from God be passed by unheeded? Shall the opportunities for service be unimproved? Shall the world’s scorn, the pride of reason, conformity to human customs and traditions, hold the professed followers of Christ from service to Him? Will they reject God’s word as the Jewish leaders rejected Christ? The result of Israel’s sin is before us. Will the church of today take warning?”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 306.

3. THE MEANING OF ISRAEL

- a. By the weakness of his human nature, Jacob had been a supplanter and a liar. Nonetheless, what was his determination with regard to the things of God? Genesis 32:24–26.

“[Proverbs 26:2; Isaiah 3:10, 11; Jeremiah 6:19 quoted.] Terrible is this truth, and deeply should it be impressed. Every deed reacts upon the doer. Never a human being but may recognize, in the evils that curse his life, fruitage of his own sowing. Yet even thus we are not without hope.

“To gain the birthright that was his already by God’s promise, Jacob resorted to fraud, and he reaped the harvest in his brother’s hatred. Through twenty years of exile he was himself wronged and defrauded, and was at last forced to find safety in flight; and he reaped a second harvest, as the evils of his own character were seen to crop out in his sons—all but too true a picture of the retributions of human life. . . .

“Jacob in his distress was not overwhelmed. He had repented, he had endeavored to atone for the wrong to his brother. And when threatened with death through the wrath of Esau, he sought help from God.”—*Education*, pp. 146, 147.

- b. Why was Jacob’s name changed to Israel? Genesis 32:27–29; Hosea 12:2–6.

“The error that had led to Jacob’s sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud was now clearly set before him. He had not trusted God’s promises, but had sought by his own efforts to bring about that which God would have accomplished in His own time and way. As an evidence that he had been forgiven, his name was changed from one that was a reminder of his sin, to one that commemorated his victory. ‘Thy name,’ said the Angel, ‘shall be called no more Jacob [the supplanter], but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed’ (Genesis 32:28).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 197, 198.

“In the power of [God’s] might the forgiven [Jacob] stood up, no longer the supplanter, but a prince with God. He had gained not merely deliverance from his outraged brother, but deliverance from himself. The power of evil in his own nature was broken; his character was transformed.”—*Education*, p. 147.

4. AN INEVITABLE CHARACTERISTIC

- a. What does the Lord emphasize about seeking the kingdom of God with firm determination? Matthew 6:33; 11:12.

“With the great truth we have been privileged to receive, we should, and under the Holy Spirit’s power we could, become living channels of light. We could then approach the mercy seat; and seeing the bow of promise, kneel with contrite hearts, and seek the kingdom of heaven with a spiritual violence that would bring its own reward. We would take it by force, as did Jacob. Then our message would be the power of God unto salvation.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1089.

“The characters we form here will decide our eternal destiny. What kind of material are we using in our character building? We must guard well every point, seeking to gain that purity which will make our lives harmonize with the saving truth we profess to believe. Our part is to put away sin, to seek with determination for perfection of character. As we thus work, God cooperates with us, fitting us for a place in His kingdom.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 11, 1901.

- b. How did the apostle Paul exemplify perseverance in spiritual matters? Philippians 3:7–14.

“God calls upon you to no longer dally with the tempter, but to cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in His fear. You need to work fast to remove the defects from your character. You are in God’s workshop. If you will submit to the process of hewing and squaring and planing, that the rough edges may be removed, the knots and uneven surface smoothed and fitted by the planing knife of God, you will be fitted by His grace for the heavenly building. But if you cling to self, and are not willing to endure the trying process of fitting for the heavenly building, you will have no place in that structure which will come together without the sound of ax or hammer.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 258.

“The battle is yours. No one can fight it for you. Others can pray for you, but the work must be wholly your own.”—*Ibid*.

5. AN INESTIMABLE TREASURE

- a. What truths should we realize about the indescribable glory of Heaven? Matthew 13:44–46; 1 Corinthians 2:9.

“At the day of judgment there comes to the lost a full realization of the meaning of the sacrifice made on Calvary. They see what they have lost by refusing to be loyal. They think of the high, pure association it was their privilege to gain. But it is too late. The last call has been made.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 16.

- b. What can we learn from the way in which, on a difficult occasion, the hand of God was extended toward Manasseh? 1 Chronicles 5:18–20. What is the good news for the spiritual members of this tribe? Revelation 7:6 (last part).

“Heaven will be cheap enough, if we obtain it through suffering. We must deny self all along the way, die to self daily, let Jesus alone appear, and keep His glory continually in view. I saw that those who of late have embraced the truth would have to know what it is to suffer for Christ’s sake, that they would have trials to pass through that would be keen and cutting, in order that they may be purified and fitted through suffering to receive the seal of the living God, pass through the time of trouble, see the King in His beauty, and dwell in the presence of God and of pure, holy angels.

“As I saw what we must be in order to inherit glory, and then saw how much Jesus had suffered to obtain for us so rich an inheritance, I prayed that we might be baptized into Christ’s sufferings, that we might not shrink at trials, but bear them with patience and joy, knowing what Jesus had suffered that we through His poverty and sufferings might be made rich.”—*Early Writings*, p. 67.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we obtain spiritual blessings from God?
2. What should be our attitude as branches grafted into God’s olive tree?
3. Explain the spiritual significance of the term “Israel.”
4. What do Matthew 6:33 and 11:12 mean for each of us today?
5. Name some point which deeply impresses your mind about the value of the Christian’s goal.

The 144,000

“[The hundred and forty and four thousand] are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Revelation 14:4).

“Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 445.

Suggested Readings: *Early Writings*, pp. 36–38.
Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 207–216.

1. PERFECT OVERCOMERS

- a. What evidence do we have that the sons of Jacob became completely different men from what they were in their early days of cruelty to their brother Joseph? Genesis 50:15–18.

“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.

“[Jacob] saw in his sons evidence of true repentance; he saw his family surrounded by all the conditions needful for the development of a great nation; and his faith grasped the sure promise of their future establishment in Canaan.”—*Ibid.*, p. 233.

- b. How does the earthly life of Jesus give us a flawless example of perfect submission to the will of our heavenly Father? John 8:29; 14:30.

“There was in [Christ] nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 123.

2. SIGNIFICANT FRUITS

- a. Name some outstanding characteristics of the overcomers in the last days. Zephaniah 3:13; Revelation 14:5, 12; 12:17.
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“A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption; and the true believer chooses Christ as first and last and best in everything. But this union costs us something. It is a union of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud being. All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God. There will be a struggle with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of detachment as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness—sin in all its forms—must be overcome if we would enter into a union with Christ.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 231.

- b. How are we to cultivate these noble traits of character? John 8:12; 16:13 (first part); 17:17.
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“Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth—these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads.”—*Ibid.*, p. 216.

- c. Describe the mental outlook necessary to be total overcomers. Philippians 2:1–8; 2 Peter 3:11, 14.
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- d. What will be the reward of these overcomers? Psalm 37:11.
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“Many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.”—*Early Writings*, p. 71.

3. THE SEAL OF GOD

- a. Explain the work of the sealing angel before the seven last plagues will be poured out. Ezekiel 9:4–6; Revelation 7:1–3.
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“I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and waving something up and down in his hand, and crying with a loud voice, ‘Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold!’ until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.”—*Early Writings*, p. 38. [Italics in the original.]

“The angel is to place a mark upon the forehead of all who are separated from sin and sinners, and the destroying angel will follow, to slay utterly both old and young.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 505.

- b. What are some key points to realize when one considers the seal of God? Exodus 20:8–11; Leviticus 20:7; Ezekiel 20:12.
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“What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the foreheads of His people? It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read; for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption.

“The angel with the writer’s ink horn is to place a mark upon the foreheads of all who are separated from sin and sinners, and the destroying angel follows this angel.

“Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1161.

“Those who trample upon God’s authority, and show open contempt to the law given in such grandeur at Sinai, virtually despise the Lawgiver, the great Jehovah. . . .

“By transgressing the law which God had given in such majesty, and amid glory which was unapproachable, the people showed open contempt of the great Lawgiver, and death was the penalty.”—*Ibid.*, p. 1162.

4. FEW TO QUALIFY

- a. Explain the spiritual depth of the seal of God, and why it is essential that believers in the third angel's message understand its true significance. Psalm 24:3–5; Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 12:14.

“Let church members bear in mind that the fact that their names are registered on the church books will not save them. They must show themselves approved of God, workmen that need not be ashamed. Day by day they are to build their characters in accordance with Christ's directions. They are to abide in Him, constantly exercising faith in Him. Thus they will grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ—wholesome, cheerful, grateful Christians, led by God into clearer and still clearer light. If this is not their experience, they will be among those whose voices will one day be raised in the bitter lamentation: ‘The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved! Why did I not flee to the Stronghold for refuge? Why have I trifled with my soul's salvation, and done despite to the Spirit of grace?’”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 48.

“The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 216.

- b. When did the sealing begin, and how many will receive the seal of the living God? Revelation 7:4; 14:1, 9–12. What is the “covering,” “shelter,” or “protection” that we must have for the time of trouble?

“The enemies of the present truth have been trying to open the door of the holy place, that Jesus has shut, and to close the door of the most holy place, which He opened in 1844, where the ark is, containing the two tables of stone on which are written the ten commandments by the finger of Jehovah.

“Satan is now using every device in this sealing time to keep the minds of God's people from the present truth and to cause them to waver. I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble.”—*Early Writings*, p. 43. [Written in 1849.]

5. THE ULTIMATE VICTORY

- a. What privilege belongs to the faithful souls described in Revelation 14:13? How do we know that Sister White and many others who have fallen asleep in Jesus will be among the 144,000 who are alive at His coming? Daniel 12:1, 2.

“As [the prophet John] looked with intense interest he beheld the company of God's commandment-keeping people. They had upon their foreheads the seal of the living God, and he said: [Revelation 14:12, 13 quoted].”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 15.

“I may live until the coming of the Lord; but if I should not, I trust it may be said of me: ‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them’ (Revelation 14:3).”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 55, 56.

“The graves were opened, and those who had died in faith under the third angel's message, keeping the Sabbath, came forth from their dusty beds, glorified, to hear the covenant of peace that God was to make with those who had kept His law.”—*Early Writings*, p. 285.

“The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 640.

“The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice.”—*Early Writings*, p. 15.

- b. What is the significance of the song sung by the 144,000 sealed saints? Revelation 14:2–4; 15:2, 3.

“[The company of them who were redeemed from among them] sing ‘a new song’ before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a song of deliverance.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 649.

“Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 9, 1905.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the depth of genuine union with Christ.
2. Why is it so important to receive the seal of God?
3. Why do the 144,000 have the joy of singing a unique song?

FIRST SABBATH OFFERINGS



July 7
for Sri Lanka
(See p. 4.)

August 4
for the missionary
schools around the
world
(See p. 25.)



September 1
for Martinique
(See p. 46.)