

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS



THE PARABLE
of the
TEN VIRGINS

First half 2026

ADVENT PILGRIMS FELLOWSHIP

*LESSONS FROM
THE PARABLE OF
THE TEN VIRGINS*

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SECTION 1

**THE HOUR OF
CHRIST'S COMING**

Introduction

TO ALL STUDENTS IN THE PATH OF PILGRIMAGE,
BLESSING AND PRACTICAL HELP FROM OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST.

We live in a time imminently close to the return of our Saviour, and for us living now He has given profound illumination as to our experience. From Matthew 24:32 all the way through to chapter 25:13 we can trace the experience of the professed people of God just before His second coming. This is the study of this Sabbath school lesson.

Profound is the material which we will research, for in it each one of us will be able to discern where we stand in readiness of the close of probation. By this discernment we may be able to make decided choices to secure our position among the saved before it is too late. How important it is then that we apply ourselves diligently to the study of this lesson.

In this first section we are dealing with the material of Matthew 24:32 to the end of the chapter. This provides the student with the necessary information by which the parable of the ten virgins will become meaningful. We will see that the discourse Jesus gave to the disciples in Matthew 24 is inseparable from the parable in chapter 25.

God grant us all His Spirit to have our minds tuned to correctly comprehend the truths that are so essential for us just now.

The Last Generation

Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Matthew 24:34

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the words of Jesus to ascertain the generation He is referring to.
- To observe the relevance of Christ's discourse to the generations just prior to this generation.
- To identify the time period that embraces the generations Jesus envisages in His discourse.

THE FIG-TREE ANALOGY

- 1. What events does Jesus point to as the signs that herald His second advent? Matt. 24:29, 30; Mark 13:24-26; Rev. 6:12-14**

“These signs were witnessed before the opening of the nineteenth century. In fulfillment of this prophecy there occurred, in the year 1755, the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded. Though commonly known as the earthquake of Lisbon, it extended to the greater part of Europe, Africa, and America. It was felt in Greenland, in the West Indies, in the island of Madeira, in Norway and Sweden, Great Britain and Ireland. It pervaded an extent of not less than four million square miles. In Africa the shock was almost as severe as in Europe. A great part of Algiers was

destroyed; and a short distance from Morocco, a village containing eight or ten thousand inhabitants was swallowed up. A vast wave swept over the coast of Spain and Africa engulfing cities and causing great destruction.”
—*The Great Controversy*, p. 304.

“In the Saviour’s conversation with His disciples upon Olivet, after describing the long period of trial for the church—the 1260 years of papal persecution, concerning which He had promised that the tribulation should be shortened—He thus mentioned certain events to precede His coming, and fixed the time when the first of these should be witnessed: “In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.” The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Following this persecution, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened. On the 19th of May, 1780, this prophecy was fulfilled.

“In 1833, . . . the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Saviour as tokens of His second advent. Said Jesus, “The stars shall fall from heaven.” And John in the Revelation declared, as he beheld in vision the scenes that should herald the day of God, “The stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.” This prophecy received a striking and impressive fulfilment in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833.”
—*Maranatha*, pp. 150, 151.

**2. How does Jesus connect the signs with the last generation?
Matt. 24:32-34; Luke 21:29-32**

3. Is there more to this parable than the mere signs of nature in the sprouting of trees in spring? Luke 13:6-9; Ezek. 31:3, 8, 9

“The Jewish nation was represented as the fig-tree which God had planted in his vineyard. This people he had taken unto himself as his own. They had been greatly favored with temporal and spiritual blessings, and he looked to them to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Year after year he had come to them hoping to find fruit, but had found none. He had been long forbearing. Justice had urged, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" But mercy pleaded for still another trial. The Dresser of the vineyard will put forth yet one more effort to save the fruitless tree. The Son of God will come in person to plead with the chosen people. He will take upon himself humanity, and set before them the example of his own life. If this fails to bring them to repentance, it is their last trial. "After that thou shalt cut it down." In the terrible destruction which came upon the Jewish nation we read the fate of the unfruitful tree.” —*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 180.

4. Did the Jewish nation and other insignificant nations shoot to indicate the generation Jesus was referring to? Joel 1:6, 7; 3:9-13

“To many Jews throughout the world, a Jewish nation in Palestine seemed the best escape from the religious persecution they often faced in other lands. During the 1800’s, in the hope of establishing such a nation, Jewish immigrants began arriving in Palestine. They drained the swamps, irrigated deserts, sank wells and planted forests, farm settlements appeared and useless land became fertile. By 1948 the Jews had become strong enough to declare Israel independent.” —*World Encyclopedia*, Israel, p. 388.

THE TIME APPOINTED

5. As Jesus connected the time of His coming with the season of summer time, does prophecy identify a time for this in world history? Dan. 8:14-19; Gen. 8:22; Jer. 5:24

“It is through His power that summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, day and night, follow each other in their regular succession. It is by His word that vegetation flourishes, that leaves appear, and the flowers bloom. Every good thing we have, each ray of sunshine and shower of rain, every morsel of food, every moment of life, is a gift of love.

“The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God’s unchanging love.”

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 59.

**6. Seeing that summertime for this earth was appointed in 1844, what would we expect by 1948 as to its concluding harvest?
Joel 3:9-13; Rev. 11:18**

“John also was a witness of the terrible scenes that will take place as signs of Christ’s coming. He saw armies mustering for battle, and people’s hearts failing them for fear. He saw the earth moved out of its place, the mountains carried into the midst of the sea, the waves thereof roaring and troubled. He saw the vials of wrath opened, and pestilence, famine, and death come upon the inhabitants of the earth.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 316.

“I was shown the inhabitants of the earth in the utmost confusion. War, bloodshed, privation, want, famine, and pestilence were abroad in the land. As these things surrounded God’s people, they began to press together, and to cast aside their little difficulties. Self-dignity no longer controlled them; deep humility took its place. Suffering, perplexity, and privation caused reason to resume its throne, and the passionate and unreasonable man became sane, and acted with discretion and wisdom.

“My attention was then called from the scene. There seemed to be a little time of peace. Once more the inhabitants of the earth were presented before

me; and again everything was in the utmost confusion. Strife, war, and bloodshed, with famine and pestilence, raged everywhere. Other nations were engaged in this war and confusion. War caused famine. Want and bloodshed caused pestilence. And then men's hearts failed them for fear, "and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."
—*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 1, p. 268.*

SEASON OF GENERATIONS

7. What danger faces the generation living since 1948? And what does it indicate in reference to the passing of generations during earth's summer season? Matt. 24:42-44

“A company was presented before me in contrast to the one described. They were waiting and watching. Their eyes were directed heavenward, and the words of their Master were upon their lips: "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping." The Lord intimates a delay before the morning finally dawns. But He would not have them give way to weariness, nor relax their earnest watchfulness, because the morning does not open upon them as soon as they expected. The waiting ones were represented to me as looking upward. They were encouraging one another by repeating these words: "The first and second watches are past. We are in the third watch, waiting and watching for the Master's return. There remains but a little period of watching now." I saw some becoming weary; their eyes were directed downward, and they were engrossed with earthly things, and were unfaithful in watching. They were saying: "In the first watch we expected our Master, but were disappointed. We thought surely He would come in the second watch, but that passed, and He came not. We may be again disappointed. We need not be so particular. He may not come in the following watch. We are in the third watch, and now we think it best to lay up our treasure on the earth, that we

may be secure against want." Many were sleeping, stupefied with the cares of this life and allured by the deceitfulness of riches from their waiting, watching position." —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 2*, p. 192.

8. When the summer harvest is ended how do those living in that last generation express themselves as they discover their failure of watching? Matt. 24:50, 51; Jer. 8:20

“Today Christ is looking with sadness upon those whose characters He must at last refuse to acknowledge. Inflated with self-sufficiency, they hope that it will be well with their souls. But at the last great day, the mirror of detection reveals to them the evil that their hearts have practiced, and shows them at the same time the impossibility of reform. Every effort was made to bring them to repentance. But they refused to humble their hearts. Now the bitter lamentation is heard, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved" (cf. Jeremiah 8:20).” —*The Upward Look*, p. 301.

“There have been those, and unless constant watchfulness is exercised, there will ever be those, who are not true and faithful, men and women who are not able to discern the sacredness of the work given them to do. Seeing, they see not, and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. Their will is not on the side of the will of God. They do not love the truth, and it has not a sanctifying, refining influence upon them. The time will come when the sensual, the proud, the careless in heart, those who are opposed to the truth, will have to be separated from the Office. Darkness will close about them, and soon, very soon the cry will come from unfeigned lips, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved." They are gathering in bundles with the tares, to be consumed by the fires of the last day.” —*The Bible Echo*, Sept. 18, 1899.

As In the Days of Noah

*But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
Matthew 24:37*

OBJECTIVES

- To gain the lessons Jesus tried to convey for the benefit of the last generation from the days before the flood.
- To observe the connection between the closing of the door of the ark and the shut door of Matthew 25:10.
- To appreciate the meaning of the coming of the Son of man.

RELEVANT COMPARISONS

- 1. How does the Bible describe the condition of society that provoked God to send a flood? Gen. 6:5-7, 11-13; Matt. 24:38**

“This is inspired testimony respecting the state of society in the days of Noah,—an accurate description of the generation that perished in the waters of the flood. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great," and that the "earth was filled with violence." The fear of God had well-nigh died out of the hearts of the children of men. Lawlessness was rife, and almost every conceivable sin was practiced. The wickedness of men was open and daring, and the cries of the oppressed reached to heaven. Justice was trampled in the dust. The strong not only disregarded the rights of the weak, but forced them to commit deeds of violence and crime.

“The wickedness of man was great; but this was not all. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The purposes and desires of the heart were corrupt from day to day.” —*The Bible Echo*, July 1, 1887.

“But if there was one sin above another which called for the destruction of the race by the flood, it was the base crime of amalgamation of man and beast which defaced the image of God, and caused confusion everywhere.” —*Spiritual Gifts Vol. 3*, p. 64.

2. Does the condition of the society of the last generation prior to the second advent of Christ equate with that generation prior to the flood? Matt. 24:37; 2 Tim. 3:1-5

“Is not this picture of the antediluvian world reproduced in our time? Man has not grown more pure and holy since the days of Noah. His heart has not changed; it is still "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." The intense worldliness of that generation is exceeded by that of the generation now living. Money is lavishly spent for costly houses, fine horses and carriages, and other expensive articles of luxury and display, while the poor suffer for food and clothing. The fear of God is banished from the hearts of the children of men, and his law is treated with indifference and neglect.

“A similar state of things exists now in relation to marriage. Marriages are formed between the godly and the ungodly, because inclination governs in the selection of husband or wife. The parties do not ask counsel of God, nor have his glory in view. Christianity ought to have a controlling, sanctifying influence upon the marriage relation; but husband and wife are not united by Christian principle; uncontrolled passion lies at the foundation of many of the marriages that are contracted at the present time.” —*The Bible Echo*, July 1, 1887.

3. What similarity is revealed in both of these periods regarding the attitude to God's servants warning of the impending destruction? 2 Pet. 3:3-7; Matt. 24:48-51

“Scoffers pointed to the things of nature—to the unvarying succession of the seasons, to the blue skies that had never poured out rain, to the green fields refreshed by the soft dews of night—and they cried out: "Doth he not speak parables?" In contempt they declared the preacher of righteousness to be a wild enthusiast; and they went on, more eager in their pursuit of pleasure, more intent upon their evil ways, than before. But their unbelief did not hinder the predicted event. God bore long with their wickedness, giving them ample opportunity for repentance; but at the appointed time His judgments were visited upon the rejecters of His mercy.

“Christ declares that there will exist similar unbelief concerning His second coming. As the people of Noah's day "knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so," in the words of our Saviour, "shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:39. When the professed people of God are uniting with the world, living as they live, and joining with them in forbidden pleasures; when the luxury of the world becomes the luxury of the church; when the marriage bells are chiming, and all are looking forward to many years of worldly prosperity—then, suddenly as the lightning flashes from the heavens, will come the end of their bright visions and delusive hopes.” —*Maranatha*, p. 263.

THE SHUT DOOR

4. When the great door of the ark was closed by an angel, did this represent the coming of the flood although for seven days nothing happened? Gen. 7:7-10

“Then the commandment was given for Noah and his family to enter the ark. The probation for the inhabitants of the Noachic world was ended. Noah went into the ark and there was seen a bright light—an angel of heaven came and shut the massive door. . . . Noah and his family were shut into the ark and the unrighteous were shut out. The mercy of God was withdrawn from that polluted and corrupt generation.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 57.

“For seven days after Noah and his family entered the ark, there appeared no sign of the coming storm. During this period their faith was tested. It was a time of triumph to the world without. The apparent delay confirmed them in the belief that Noah’s message was a delusion, and that the Flood would never come. Notwithstanding the solemn scenes which they had witnessed—the beasts and birds entering the ark, and the angel of God closing the door—they still continued their sport and revelry, even making a jest of these signal manifestations of God’s power. They gathered in crowds about the ark, deriding its inmates with a daring violence which they had never ventured upon before.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 98.

5. Did Jesus show a parallel to this shut door in His discourse on the days of His second coming? Matt. 24:43, 44; 25:10-13

“While many were blaspheming and cursing their Creator, others were frantic with fear, stretching their hands toward the ark, pleading for admittance. But this was impossible. God had closed the door, the only entrance, and shut Noah in and the ungodly out. He alone could open the door. Their fear and repentance came too late. They were compelled to know that there was a living God who was mightier than man, whom they had defied and blasphemed. They called upon Him earnestly, but His ear was not open to their cry. Some in their desperation sought to break into the ark, but that firm-made structure resisted all their efforts. Some clung to the ark until borne away with the furious surging of the waters, or their

hold was broken off by rocks and trees that were hurled in every direction.”

—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 67.

“There was a shut door in Noah’s time. There was a shut door to the unbelievers in the destruction of Sodom, but an open door to Lot. There was a shut door to the inhabitants of Tyrus, a shut door to the inhabitants of Jerusalem . . . who disbelieved, but an open door to the humble, the believing, those who obeyed God. Thus it will be at the end of time.”

—*This Day With God*, p. 235.

6. As in Noah’s time there was a period of life on earth and yet the door of hope was closed, is this the case with people living after 1844? Matt. 24:40-42

“There was a shut door in Noah’s day. There was at that time a withdrawal of the Spirit of God from the sinful race that perished in the waters of the Flood. God Himself gave the shut-door message to Noah: "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." (Genesis 6:3).”

“Looking down the stream of time to the last days, the same infinite power proclaimed through John: "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (Revelation 3:7).

“I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a shut door in 1844. All who saw the light of the first and second angels’ messages and rejected that light, were left in darkness. And those who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterward renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion, thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them.” —*Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 63.

MEANING OF CHRIST'S COMING

7. How do we observe the meaning of Jesus when He says that His coming is as a thief, when He also says that when He comes every eye will see Him? Mark 13:35-37

“Jesus has left us word: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." We are waiting and watching for the return of the Master, who is to bring the morning, lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping. What time is here referred to? Not to the revelation of Christ in the clouds of heaven to find a people asleep. No; but to His return from His ministration in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, when He lays off His priestly attire and clothes Himself with garments of vengeance, and when the mandate goes forth: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 2, p. 190.*

MEDITATION

“When Jesus ceases to plead for man, the cases of all are forever decided. This is the time of reckoning with His servants. To those who have neglected the preparation of purity and holiness, which fits them to be waiting ones to welcome their Lord, the sun sets in gloom and darkness, and rises not again. Probation closes; Christ’s intercessions cease in heaven. This time finally comes suddenly upon all, and those who have neglected to purify their souls by obeying the truth are found sleeping. They became weary of waiting and watching; they became indifferent in regard to the coming of their Master. They longed not for His appearing, and thought there was no need of such continued, persevering watching. They had been disappointed in their expectations and might be again. They concluded that there was time enough yet to arouse. They would be sure

not to lose the opportunity of securing an earthly treasure. It would be safe to get all of this world they could. And in securing this object, they lost all anxiety and interest in the appearing of the Master. They became indifferent and careless, as though His coming were yet in the distance. But while their interest was buried up in their worldly gains, the work closed in the heavenly sanctuary, and they were unprepared.

“If such had only known that the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary would close so soon, how differently would they have conducted themselves, how earnestly would they have watched! The Master, anticipating all this, gives them timely warning in the command to watch. He distinctly states the suddenness of His coming. He does not measure the time, lest we shall neglect a momentary preparation, and in our indolence look ahead to the time when we think He will come, and defer the preparation. "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not." Yet this foretold uncertainty, and suddenness at last, fails to rouse us from stupidity to earnest wakefulness, and to quicken our watchfulness for our expected Master. Those not found waiting and watching are finally surprised in their unfaithfulness. The Master comes, and instead of their being ready to open unto Him immediately, they are locked in worldly slumber, and are lost at last.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 2*, p. 191.

The Close of Probation

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be over charged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Luke 21:34

OBJECTIVES

- To enlarge further the meaning of Jesus as to His second coming as a thief.
- To become aware of the events affecting God's people to render them unready for that day.
- To identify the event we are to watch out for by which we can know the commencement of His coming.

AS A SNARE

- 1. Having seen from the previous lesson that Jesus meant His second advent to commence by His closing of intercession in the heavenly sanctuary, can we discern the element of surprise for those who think it refers to His visible coming? Luke 21:35; Matt. 24:50**

“When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Christ in the Revelation, looking forward to that time, declares: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy

still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 490.

2. How does Christ’s visible coming differ from the closing of His ministration in the heavenly sanctuary? Ps. 50:3; Rev. 1:7; 22:11, 12

“The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state—men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above. Before the Flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. "So," says the Saviour, "shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:39. Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man’s destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy’s offer to guilty men.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 491.

3. Will it be recognised that probation has closed, and how does the Bible foretell the consternation of souls caught out? Jer. 8:20; Luke 13:25-27

“Today Christ is looking with sadness upon those whose characters He must at last refuse to acknowledge. Inflated with self-sufficiency, they hope that it will be well with their souls. But at the last great day, the mirror of detection reveals to them the evil that their hearts have practiced, and shows them at the same time the impossibility of reform. Every effort was

made to bring them to repentance. But they refused to humble their hearts. Now the bitter lamentation is heard, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved" (cf. Jeremiah 8:20)." —*The Upward Look*, p. 301.

INFLUENCES UNTO COMPLACENCY

4. What kind of circumstances endanger God's people to render them unprepared for Christ's second coming? Luke 21:34-36; Mark 4:19

"I saw some becoming weary; their eyes were directed downward, and they were engrossed with earthly things, and were unfaithful in watching. They were saying: "In the first watch we expected our Master, but were disappointed. We thought surely He would come in the second watch, but that passed, and He came not. We may be again disappointed. We need not be so particular. He may not come in the following watch. We are in the third watch, and now we think it best to lay up our treasure on the earth, that we may be secure against want." Many were sleeping, stupefied with the cares of this life and allured by the deceitfulness of riches from their waiting, watching position."

"I saw that it was impossible to have the affections and interests engrossed in worldly cares, to be increasing earthly possessions, and yet be in a waiting, watching position, as our Saviour has commanded. Said the angel: "They can secure but one world. In order to acquire the heavenly treasure, they must sacrifice the earthly. They cannot have both worlds." I saw how necessary a continuance of faithfulness in watching was in order to escape the delusive snares of Satan. He leads those who should be waiting and watching, to take an advance step toward the world; they have no intention of going further, but that one step removed them that much further from Jesus, and made it easier to take the next; and thus step after step is taken toward the world, until all the difference between them and the world is a profession, a name only. They have lost their peculiar, holy character, and

there is nothing except their profession to distinguish them from the lovers of the world around them.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 2*, pp. 192, 193.

**5. Can these unready ones be even among those proclaiming the second coming of Jesus? Where is their unreadiness lodged?
Matt. 24:48-51**

“The evil servant says in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming." He does not say that Christ will not come. He does not scoff at the idea of His second coming. But in his heart and by his actions and words he declares that the Lord's coming is delayed. He banishes from the minds of others the conviction that the Lord is coming quickly. His influence leads men to presumptuous, careless delay. They are confirmed in their worldliness and stupor. Earthly passions, corrupt thoughts, take possession of the mind. The evil servant eats and drinks with the drunken, unites with the world in pleasure seeking. He smites his fellow servants, accusing and condemning those who are faithful to their Master. He mingles with the world. Like grows with like in transgression. It is a fearful assimilation. With the world he is taken in the snare. "The lord of that servant shall come . . . in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 635.

**6. How are we counselled to relate to the many pressing issues that overtake us in this fast age, thus distracting us from watching?
1 Thess. 5:2-8**

“There is an important work for every one to do; and that work must be performed with reference to the decisions of the Judgment and the coming

of the Son of man in the clouds of glory. Whatever else may take our attention in the common affairs of life, we want to constantly be mindful of our duty and obligation to God. The things of God must not be suffered to drop out of mind, though a thousand other things may press themselves upon our attention. Our great work here is to press the triumphs of the cross of Christ to the very gates of the enemy. Such a work requires untiring vigilance. And to do this, we must have a living connection with Jesus, the great conqueror.” —*The Review and Herald*, Aug. 18, 1885.

“You must resist an encroaching world, which if allowed will so press upon you as to separate you from the source of your strength. Put on Christ. In the closet commune with Him who seeth in secret. Lay hold by faith on His might. Make peace with Him, and you shall make peace with Him. Nothing else will carry you through the closing scenes of this earth’s history, and give you the victory and the crown of life that fadeth not away. Press toward the mark of the prize.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 21*, p. 42.

THE EVENT TO LOOK FOR

7. What event does prophecy connect with the conclusion of Christ’s ministration and the close of probation? Dan. 11:45; 12:1

“Those professed believers who come up to the time of trouble unprepared, will, in their despair, confess their sins before all in words of burning anguish, while the wicked exult over their distress. The case of all such is hopeless. When Christ stands up, and leaves the most holy place, then the time of trouble commences, and the case of every soul is decided, and there will be no atoning blood to cleanse from sin and pollution. As Jesus leaves the most holy, he speaks in tones of decision and kingly authority: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” —*The Spirit of Prophecy Vol. 1*, p. 123.

“A definite time is introduced in this verse [Dan. 12:1], not a time revealed in names or figures which specify any particular year or month or day, but a time made definite by the occurrence of a certain event with which it stands connected. "At that time." What time? - The time to which we are brought by the closing verse of the preceding chapter, - the time when the king of the north shall plant the tabernacles of his palace in the glorious holy mountain; ... This movement on the part of Turkey is the signal for the standing up of Michael; that is, it marks this event as next in order.”
—Uriah Smith, *Daniel and The Revelation* (1897), p. 319.

8. Who will understand the things involved at this time? Dan. 12:3, 10; Matt. 25:8-10

“We are now amid the perils of the last days, when many shall be purified, made white, and tried. But the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. The warning is given, "Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." O, that the work of reformation so essential might begin! O, that all on duty would stand at their post, saying, "Here am I, send me"! He who is wise in counsel is waiting for all to see their need of help; and it is abundantly provided; it is waiting for you. As a present help in every time of need, God's presence is revealed. As you call upon His name for help, He says, "Here I am," close beside you, ready to help you if you are ready to be helped.” —*The Signs of the Times*, March 17, 1898.

One Taken, the Other Left

*Then shall two be in a field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
Matthew 24:40*

OBJECTIVES

- To learn the meaning of Christ's words "the one shall be taken, and the other left".
- To appreciate the reality that by the Holy Spirit and the faith of the believer a soul may dwell in heavenly places.
- To explore the position of God's people in following the work of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary.

IN HEAVENLY PLACES

1. What is the privilege of the soul who receives the Holy Spirit and opens his heart to the atonement of Jesus? Eph. 2:4-6

"The Lamb of God is represented before us as "in the midst of the throne" of God. He is the great ordinance by which man and God are united and commune together. Thus men are represented as sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is the appointed place of meeting between God and humanity." —*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 124.

2. How does Inspiration describe this in the experience of the early apostles? Col. 3:1, 2

“Such was the work of ministration in the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven. Thither the faith of Christ’s disciples followed Him as He ascended from their sight. Here their hopes centered, "which hope we have," said Paul, "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever." "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 420, 421.

3. Is it possible in reality to physically be on this earth and yet sit in heavenly places by faith? Heb. 11:1, 27; 2 Cor. 5:7; 1 Cor. 2:9, 10

“Faith is not the ground of our salvation, but it is the great blessing—the eye that sees, the ear that hears, the feet that run, the hand that grasps. It is the means, not the end. If Christ gave His life to save sinners, why shall I not take that blessing? My faith grasps it, and thus my faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. Thus resting and believing, I have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.”
—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 104.

FOLLOWING JESUS IN THE SANCTUARY

4. Does Scripture allude to God’s people positioned in the heavenly sanctuary? Heb. 10:19-22; Rev. 11:1, 2

5. As the early apostles evidently followed Jesus by faith into the first apartment of the sanctuary, where do the believers since 1844 take their position? Rev. 3:7, 8

“After Jesus opened the door of the most holy, the light of the Sabbath was seen, and the people of God were tested, as the children of Israel were tested anciently, to see if they would keep God’s law. I saw the third angel pointing upward, showing the disappointed ones the way to the holiest of the heavenly sanctuary. As they by faith enter the most holy, they find Jesus, and hope and joy spring up anew. I saw them looking back, reviewing the past, from the proclamation of the second advent of Jesus, down through their experience to the passing of the time in 1844. They see their disappointment explained, and joy and certainty again animate them. The third angel has lighted up the past, the present, and the future, and they know that God has indeed led them by His mysterious providence.”

—*Early Writings*, p. 254.

CHRIST’S MEANING

**6. For those who do not follow Jesus in His ministrations, is there such a thing as them being left out while others are in?
Matt. 23:37, 38; Luke 13:23-25**

“It is those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement who receive the benefits of His mediation in their behalf, while those who reject the light which brings to view this work of ministration are not benefited thereby. The Jews who rejected the light given at Christ’s first advent, and refused to believe on Him as the Saviour of the world, could

not receive pardon through Him. When Jesus at His ascension entered by His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary to shed upon His disciples the blessings of His mediation, the Jews were left in total darkness to continue their useless sacrifices and offerings. The ministration of types and shadows had ceased. That door by which men had formerly found access to God was no longer open. The Jews had refused to seek Him in the only way whereby He could then be found, through the ministration in the sanctuary in heaven. Therefore they found no communion with God. To them the door was shut. They had no knowledge of Christ as the true sacrifice and the only mediator before God; hence they could not receive the benefits of His mediation.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 430.

“I saw the Father rise from the throne, [see page 92.] and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him. I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after He arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who arose when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him as He left the throne and led them out a little way. Then He raised His right arm, and we heard His lovely voice saying, "Wait here; I am going to My Father to receive the kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to Myself." Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father. On the hem of His garment was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, "My Father, give us Thy Spirit." Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace.

“I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, "Father, give us Thy Spirit." Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan’s object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God’s children.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 55, 56.

7. In the light of question six, did Jesus mean that two people can be working side by side on earth, one by faith secure in the sanctuary when the door of probation closes, while the other is left out? Matt. 24:38-41

“The one shall be taken.” His name shall stand in the book of life, while those with whom he associated shall have the mark of eternal separation from God.” —*Last Day Events*, p. 216.

“There was a shut door in Noah’s time. There was a shut door to the unbelievers in the destruction of Sodom, but an open door to Lot. There was a shut door to the inhabitants of Tyrus, a shut door to the inhabitants of Jerusalem . . . who disbelieved, but an open door to the humble, the believing, those who obeyed God. Thus it will be at the end of time.” —*This Day With God*, p. 235.

“The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state—men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above. Before the Flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. “So,” says the Saviour, “shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:39. Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man’s destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy’s offer to guilty men.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 491.

Watching Diligently

Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. Proverbs 8:34

OBJECTIVES

- To explore God's word for His call to watch.
- To gain an understanding of the meaning of watching.
- To appreciate the serious issues that make watching a diligent matter.

THE CALL TO WATCH

- 1. How explicitly is the call to watch cited in Scripture? Prov. 8:34; 1 Cor. 16:13; 1 Pet. 4:7**

- 2. With what earnestness does one who is devoted to God express his disposition to watch? Ps. 130:5, 6; Hab. 2:1**

“Christ and His word are in perfect harmony. Received and obeyed, they open a sure path for the feet of all who are willing to walk in the light as Christ is in the light. If the people of God would appreciate His word, we

should have a heaven in the church here below. Christians would be eager, hungry, to search the word. They would be anxious for time to compare scripture with scripture and to meditate upon the word. They would be more eager for the light of the word than for the morning paper, magazines, or novels. Their greatest desire would be to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God. And as a result their lives would be conformed to the principles and promises of the word. Its instruction would be to them as the leaves of the tree of life. It would be in them a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. Refreshing showers of grace would refresh and revive the soul, causing them to forget all toil and weariness. They would be strengthened and encouraged by the words of inspiration.”
—*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 8, p. 193.*

3. How earnestly did Jesus call for us to watch? Matt. 26:41; Mark 13:33-35

“In the warning to "watch and pray," Jesus has indicated the only safe course. There is need of watchfulness. Our own hearts are deceitful; we are compassed with the weaknesses and frailties of humanity, and Satan is intent to destroy. We may be off our guard, but our adversary is never idle. Knowing his tireless vigilance, let us not sleep, as do others, but "watch and be sober." The spirit and influence of the world must be met, but they must not be allowed to take possession of the mind and heart.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5, p. 409.*

BIBLICAL WATCHING

4. Do we understand the meaning of the Bible expression of watching? Eph. 6:18

“Whatever may be man’s intellectual advancement, let him not for a moment think that there is no need of thorough and continuous searching of the Scriptures for greater light. As a people, we are called individually to be students of prophecy. We must watch with earnestness that we may discern any ray of light which God shall present to us. We are to catch the first gleamings of truth; and through prayerful study, clearer light may be obtained, which can be brought before others.” —*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 41.

“First, you are to watch. Watch, lest you should speak hastily, fretfully, and impatiently. Watch, lest pride should find a place in your heart. Watch, lest evil passions should overcome you, instead of your subduing them. Watch, lest . . . you . . . become light and trifling, and your influence savor of death, rather than life.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 224.

“If ever there was a time when we needed faith and spiritual enlightenment, it is now. Those who are watching unto prayer and are searching the Scriptures daily with an earnest desire to know and do the will of God, will not be led astray by any of the deceptions of Satan . . . We want the truth on every point. We want it unadulterated with error and unpolluted by the maxims, customs, and opinions of the world. We want the truth with all its inconvenience. The acceptance of truth ever involves a cross. But Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice for us, and shall we not give Him our best affections, our holiest aspirations, our fullest service?” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 350.

5. Give a lineup of the different things to watch for. Mark 14:38

“Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.” Luke 21:34.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6*, p. 410.

“Again I inquire, What are you going to do? Will you be wholly on the Lord’s side? Will you be a converted man? Remember, I do not say you never have been converted; but will you now have a new consecration? Will you die to self? Will you put away every wrong, and watch, watch for

the stealthy approach of the enemy; watch the old habits of sin that will steal back upon you and that need to be shaken off again and again; watch over a careless, unruly tongue; watch your spirit, lest, because you cannot have your own way, you become desperate reckless, profane; watch for opportunities to do good; be ever learning humility and meekness at the feet of Jesus.” —*Pamphlet n°96, Testimonies on the Case of Elder E. P. Daniels*, p. 78.

REASONS FOR DILIGENCE

6. What are the serious situations which call for diligent watching?

1 Pet. 5:8; Luke 21:36; Rev. 16:13-15

“Let every soul be on the alert. The adversary is on your track. Be vigilant, watching diligently lest some carefully concealed and masterly snare shall take you unawares. Let the careless and indifferent beware lest the day of the Lord come upon them as a thief in the night. . . .

“He who overcomes must watch; for, with worldly entanglements, error, and superstition, Satan strives to win Christ’s followers from Him. It is not enough that we avoid glaring dangers and perilous, inconsistent moves. We are to keep close to the side of Christ, walking in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. We are in an enemy’s country. He who was cast out of heaven has come down with great power. With every conceivable artifice and device he is seeking to take souls captive. Unless we are constantly on guard we shall fall an easy prey to his unnumbered deceptions.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 332.

7. Describe the prevailing influences that require diligence in watching. 1 Tim. 4:1, 2; 2 Pet. 3:3, 4

“God designs that His people shall fix their eyes heavenward, looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. While the attention of worldlings is turned to various enterprises, ours should be to the heavens; our faith should reach further and further into the glorious mysteries of the heavenly treasure, drawing the precious, divine rays of light from the heavenly sanctuary to shine in our hearts, as they shine upon the face of Jesus. The scoffers mock the waiting, watching ones, and inquire: "Where is the promise of His coming? You have been disappointed. Engage now with us, and you will prosper in worldly things. Get gain, get money, and be honored of the world." The waiting ones look upward and answer: "We are watching." And by turning from earthly pleasure and worldly fame, and from the deceitfulness of riches, they show themselves to be in that position. By watching they become strong; they overcome sloth and selfishness and love of ease. Affliction's fire kindles upon them, and the waiting time seems long. They sometimes grieve, and faith falters; but they rally again, overcome their fears and doubts, and while their eyes are directed heavenward, say to their adversaries: "I am watching, I am waiting the return of my Lord. I will glory in tribulation, in affliction, in necessities." —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 2, p. 194.*

**8. In consideration of the believer's love for Jesus, to meet Him soon, is there a strong incentive to watch with fervent diligence?
Luke 12:36-38**

“The desire of our Lord is that we should be watching, so that when He cometh and knocketh we may open to Him immediately. A blessing is pronounced upon those servants whom He finds watching. "He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Who among us in these last days will be thus specially honored by the Master of assemblies? Are we prepared without delay to open to Him immediately and welcome Him in? Watch, watch, watch.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 2, p. 195.*

MEDITATION

“I saw that watch after watch was in the past. Because of this, should there be a lack of vigilance? Oh, no! There is the greater necessity of unceasing watchfulness, for now the moments are fewer than before the passing of the first watch. Now the period of waiting is necessarily shorter than at first. If we watched with unabated vigilance then, how much more need of double watchfulness in the second watch. The passing of the second watch has brought us to the third, and now it is inexcusable to abate our watchfulness. The third watch calls for threefold earnestness. To become impatient now would be to lose all our earnest, persevering watching heretofore. The long night of gloom is trying; but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God’s unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason for so long delay. But the coming of the morning to the faithful, and of the night to the unfaithful, is right upon us. By waiting and watching, God’s people are to manifest their peculiar character, their separation from the world. By our watching position we are to show that we are truly strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. The difference between those who love the world and those who love Christ is so plain as to be unmistakable. While worldlings are all earnestness and ambition to secure earthly treasure, God’s people are not conformed to the world, but show by their earnest, watching, waiting position that they are transformed; that their home is not in this world, but that they are seeking a better country, even a heavenly.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 2*, p. 193.

Meat in Due Season

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season. Matthew 24:45

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the ministry with the appropriate message prior to the close of probation.
- To discern the spiritual food in season for these times.
- To recognise the many distracting subjects we need to discard at these times.

FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT

- 1. Does prophecy reveal a ministry that arises into prominence in the period just prior to the close of probation? Rev. 14:6-14**

“During the past fifty years of my life, I have had precious opportunities to obtain an experience. I have had an experience in the first, second, and third angels’ messages. The angels are represented as flying in the midst of heaven, proclaiming to the world a message of warning, and having a direct bearing upon the people living in the last days of this earth’s history. No one hears the voice of these angels, for they are a symbol to represent the people of God who are working in harmony with the universe of heaven. Men and women, enlightened by the Spirit of God and sanctified through the truth, proclaim the three messages in their order.” —*Selected Messages Book 2*, p. 387.

2. How can this ministry be recognised after four and five generations since Sister White's time? Rev. 12:17; Isa. 6:12, 13

“I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. I was shown three steps,—the first, second, and third angels' messages. Said my accompanying angel, "Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received." I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform.” —*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 53.

3. What are those in this present generation admonished to do if they want to be acknowledged as a faithful and wise servant? Jer. 6:16; Deut. 32:7

“The very same Satan is at work to undermine the faith of the people of God at this time. There are persons ready to catch up every new idea. The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation are misinterpreted. These persons do not consider that the truth has been set forth at the appointed time by the very men whom God was leading to do this special work. These men followed on step by step in the very fulfillment of prophecy, and those who have not had a personal experience in this work, are to take the Word of

God and believe on "their word" who have been led by the Lord in the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. These messages, received and acted upon, are doing their work to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God. If we search the Scriptures to confirm the truth God has given His servants for the world, we shall be found proclaiming the first, second, and third angels' messages." —*Selected Messages Book 2*, p. 111.

MEAT IN SEASON

4. Can we discern the most necessary subjects relevant for preparation for Christ's return in the three angels' messages? Rev. 18:1-4

"Thus the substance of the second angel's message is again given to the world by that other angel who lightens the earth with his glory. These messages all blend in one, to come before the people in the closing days of this earth's history. All the world will be tested, and all that have been in the darkness of error in regard to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment will understand the last message of mercy that is to be given to men." —*Selected Messages Book 2*, p. 116.

"The third angel's message in its clear, definite terms is to be made the prominent warning. All that it comprehends is to be made intelligible to the reasoning minds of today. While we bind ourselves to the development of the truth in the past angels' messages, we are announcing the message of the third angel and of the other angel that follows the third, the second time proclaiming the fall of Babylon." —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 10*, p. 315.

5. Is there a subject presented by the faithful and wise servants that is all-inclusive of the three angels' messages? Ps. 73:2, 3, 13-18

“The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God’s hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people.”

“But the people were not yet ready to meet their Lord. There was still a work of preparation to be accomplished for them. Light was to be given, directing their minds to the temple of God in heaven; and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in His ministration there, new duties would be revealed. Another message of warning and instruction was to be given to the church.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 423, 424.

6. How does Scripture summarise the work of the faithful and wise servant in the last days? Isa. 58:1, 12-14

“Here are given the characteristics of those who shall be reformers, who will bear the banner of the third angel’s message, those who avow themselves God’s commandment-keeping people, and who honor God, and are earnestly engaged, in the sight of all the universe, in building up the old waste places. Who is it that calls them, The repairers of the breach, The restorers of paths to dwell in? It is God. Their names are registered in heaven as reformers, restorers, as raising the foundations of many generations.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4*, p. 1151.

DISTRACTING SUBJECTS

7. While the work of the faithful servant is clearly laid out, what can distract from this important work? Rom. 14:1

“My brethren, take your position where God bids you. Leave alone those who, after light has been repeatedly given them, have taken a stand on the opposite side. . . . Take up the work which has been given us. With the Word of God as your message, stand on the platform of truth and proclaim the soon coming of Christ. Truth, eternal truth, will prevail.

“For more than half a century [i.e., since 1844] the different points of present truth have been questioned and opposed. New theories have been advanced as truth, which were not truth, and the Spirit of God revealed their error. As the great pillars of our faith have been presented, the Holy Spirit has borne witness to them, and especially is this so regarding the truths of the sanctuary question. Over and over again the Holy Spirit has in a marked manner endorsed the preaching of this doctrine. But today, as in the past, some will be led to form new theories and to deny the truths upon which the Spirit of God has placed His approval.”

“There will always be those who are seeking for something new, and who stretch and strain the Word of God to make it support their ideas and theories. Let us, brethren, take the things that God has given us, and which His Spirit has taught us is truth, and believe them, leaving alone those theories which His Spirit has not endorsed.” —*Our Father Cares*, p. 271.

8. Are there subjects that may be of interest but which can distract from the focus on the essential meat in due season? Jer. 23:28; Mark 7:6-9

“Brethren should not feel that it is a virtue to stand apart because they do not see all minor points in exactly the same light. If they agree on fundamental truths, they should not differ and dispute about matters of little real importance. To dwell on perplexing questions, that after all are of no vital consequence, tends to call the mind away from truths vital to the saving of the soul. Brethren should be very modest in urging these side issues which often they do not themselves understand, points that they do not know to be truth and that are not essential to salvation. . . .

“I have been shown that it is the device of the enemy to divert men’s minds to some obscure or unimportant point, something that is not fully revealed or is not essential to salvation. This is made the absorbing theme, the "present truth," when all the investigations and suppositions only serve to make matters more obscure and to confuse the minds of some who ought to be seeking for oneness through sanctification of the truth.” —*Evangelism*, p. 182.

“That which Brother D calls light is apparently harmless; it does not look as though anyone could be injured by it. But, brethren, it is Satan’s device, his entering wedge. This has been tried again and again. One accepts some new and original idea which does not seem to conflict with the truth. He talks of it and dwells upon it until it seems to him to be clothed with beauty and importance, for Satan has power to give this false appearance. At last it becomes the all-absorbing theme, the one great point around which everything centers; and the truth is uprooted from the heart.” —*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 46.

The Wise Servant

Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching... Luke 12:37

OBJECTIVES

- To recognise how a wise servant can be discerned.
- To trace the wise servants in the prophecies which describe the church in the last days.
- To observe the honour Jesus regards them with.

THE FAITHFUL MINISTRY

1. Does Scripture give descriptions of ministries that can be trusted as faithful and true? Jer. 3:14, 15; Isa. 8:16, 20

“Notwithstanding the prevailing iniquity, there was a line of holy men and women who, elevated and ennobled by communion with God, lived as in the companionship of heaven. They were people of massive intellect, of wonderful attainments. They had a great and holy mission—to develop a character of righteousness, to teach a lesson of godliness not only to the people of their time but for future generations. Only a few of the most prominent are mentioned in the Scriptures, but all through the ages God had faithful witnesses, truehearted worshipers.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 40.

“The church is God’s fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the blood of His only-begotten Son. From the

beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armor, others took up the work. God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven. He has sent forth His angels to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against His people.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11.

**2. Are we assured that such ministries can be found in the generation living immediately prior to Christ’s return?
Matt. 28:20**

“The prayer of Christ is not only for those who are now His disciples, but for all those who shall believe on Christ through the words of His disciples, even to the end of the world. Jesus was just about to yield up His life to bring life and immortality to light. Christ, amid His sufferings, and being daily rejected of men, looks down the lines two thousand years to His church which would be in existence in the last days, before the close of this earth’s history.” —*Selected Messages Book 3*, p. 18.

3. What faithfulness is this wise servant known for, and what is meant by it? Luke 12:37; Ezek. 3:17; Isa. 21:11, 12

“It is the privilege of the watchmen on the walls of Zion to live so near to God, and to be 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. Not for wages are they to labor, but because they cannot do otherwise, because they realize that there is a woe upon them if they fail to preach the gospel. Chosen of God, sealed with the blood of consecration, they are to rescue men and women from impending destruction.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 361.

PROPHETIC IDENTIFICATION

4. Knowing that Laodicea describes the servants of God in the last days, can we identify the formation of the faithful and wise servant immediately prior to the coming of Jesus? Rev. 1:20; 3:14-16 & 20, 21

“These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand.” Revelation 2:1. These words are spoken to the teachers in the church—those entrusted by God with weighty responsibilities. The sweet influences that are to be abundant in the church are bound up with God’s ministers, who are to reveal the love of Christ. The stars of heaven are under His control. He fills them with light. He guides and directs their movements. If He did not do this, they would become fallen stars. So with His ministers. They are but instruments in His hands, and all the good they accomplish is done through His power. Through them His light is to shine forth. The Saviour is to be their efficiency. If they will look to Him as He looked to the Father they will be enabled to do His work. As they make God their dependence, He will give them His brightness to reflect to the world.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 586.

5. How vividly is the formation of the wise servant described in the Spirit of Prophecy? Rev. 3:20, 21

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God’s people.”

“Said the angel: "List ye!" Soon I heard a voice that sounded like many musical instruments, all in perfect strains, sweet and harmonious. It surpassed any music I had ever heard. It seemed to be so full of mercy, compassion, and elevating, holy joy. It thrilled through my whole being. Said the angel: "Look ye!" My attention was then turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying with agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order, firmly, like a company of soldiers. Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude, and holy, sacred joy.”

“I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth in great power. It had effect. I saw those who had been bound; some wives had been bound by their husbands, and some children had been bound by their parents. The honest who had been held or prevented from hearing the truth, now eagerly laid hold of it. All fear of their relatives was gone. The truth alone was exalted to them. It was dearer and more precious than life. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered: "It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 1*, pp. 181, 182.

6. Can we trace the last faithful ministry in other prophetic descriptions? Rev. 12:17; Amos 5:3-5; Song 6:8-10

“There are many doctrines current in our world. There is many a religion current that numbers its thousands and tens of thousands, but there is but one that bears the superscription and the stamp of God. There is a religion of man and a religion of God. We must have our souls riveted to the eternal Rock. Everything in God’s world, both men and doctrines and nature itself, is fulfilling God’s sure word of prophecy and accomplishing His grand and closing work in this world’s history.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 12*, p. 324.

“The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and he longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from his countenance, and his conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. Every member of his church militant must manifest the same qualities, if he would join the church triumphant. The love of Christ is so broad, so full of glory, that in comparison to it, everything that men esteem as great, dwindles into insignificance. When we obtain a view of it, we exclaim, O the depth of the riches of the love that God bestowed upon men in the gift of his only begotten Son!” —*Christian Education*, p. 76.

HONOURABLE DESCRIPTIONS

7. In which way does Jesus honour these faithful servants? Matt. 24:46, 47; 25:21

“God’s ministers, God’s missionaries, are to unite with Him. If they put their trust in Him, and commit the keeping of their souls to Him as unto a faithful Creator, He will keep that which is committed unto Him against that day. He will honour those who honour Him.” —*Testimonies to South Africa*, p. 92.

“All that we are or can be belongs to God. Education, discipline, and skill in every line should be used for Him. The capital is His, and the improvement is the usury that rightfully belongs to the Master. Whether the amount entrusted is large or small, the Lord requires that His householders do their best. It is not the amount entrusted or the improvement made that brings to

men the approbation of Heaven, but it is the faithfulness, the loyalty to God, the loving service rendered, that brings the divine benediction, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Verse 23. This reward of joy does not wait until our entrance into the city of God, but the faithful servant has a foretaste of it even in this life." —*Our High Calling*, p. 289.

8. How else is the honour for faithful servants expressed in Scripture? John 12:26; Luke 12:37, 38

“Shall we not rather do that medical missionary work which is the gospel in practice, living in such a way that the peace of God can rule in our hearts? Shall we not remove every stumblingblock from the feet of unbelievers, ever remembering what is due to a profession of Christianity? Far better give up the name of Christian than make a profession and at the same time indulge appetites which strengthen unholy passions.”
—*The Review and Herald*, May 27, 1902.

The Evil Servant

And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. Matthew 24:49

OBJECTIVES

- To obtain a clear understanding how a servant of God can be an evil servant.
- To understand the meaning of smiting the fellow faithful servant.
- To comprehend the term “eating and drinking with the drunken”.

GOOD TO EVIL

- 1. Can it be demonstrated that a good person or a good church can become evil? 1 Sam. 9:17; 10:1, 9; 16:1; Isa. 1:21**

“The Lord would not leave Saul to be placed in a position of trust without divine enlightenment. He was to have a new calling, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. The effect was that he was changed into a new man. The Lord gave Saul a new spirit, other thoughts, other aims and desires than he had previously had. This enlightenment, with the spiritual knowledge of God, placing him on vantage ground, was to bind his will to the will of Jehovah.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 2*, p. 1013.

“There is a right side—the side of Him who declared, “I have kept my Father’s commandments” (John 15:10). “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul” (Psalm 19:7). There is a wrong side—the side of the one who in heaven rebelled against God. With his sympathizers he was

expelled from the heavenly courts, and from his action we may understand that no matter how high a position a man may occupy in the church or in the world, if he is disloyal to God, if he accepts human laws instead of the laws of Jehovah, he can never enter heaven, for he is living in direct opposition to God. He will receive punishment in accordance with the power of influence which instead of being placed on the side of God was placed on the side of Satan. The greater the talents and influence given him, the greater will be his punishment. God will require at his hands the souls he has turned aside from truth to falsehood. Instead of leading them to God, he led them away from God, and their blood will be charged to him.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 140.

2. As in the case of King Saul and the Hebrew church, can we see a similar demonstration in the church of the last days? Rev. 3:14-17

“To those who are indifferent at this time Christ’s warning is: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth." Revelation 3:16. The figure of spewing out of His mouth means that He cannot offer up your prayers or your expressions of love to God. He cannot endorse your teaching of His word or your spiritual work in anywise. He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6*, p. 408.

3. How did Jesus forecast this rift between two classes of ministries in the church of Laodicea? Matt. 24:45, 48

“A company was presented before me under the name of Seventh-day Adventists, who were advising that the banner or sign which makes us a distinctive people should not be held out so strikingly; for they claimed it

was not the best policy in securing success to our institutions. This distinctive banner is to be borne through the world to the close of probation. In describing the remnant people of God, John says, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). This is the law and the gospel. The world and the churches are uniting in harmony in transgressing the law of God, in tearing away God's memorial, and in exalting a sabbath that bears the signature of the man of sin. But the Sabbath of the Lord thy God is to be a sign to show the difference between the obedient and the disobedient. I saw some reaching out their hands to remove the banner, and to obscure its significance." —*Selected Messages Book 2*, p. 385.

OPPOSING RELATIONSHIPS

4. What call did the Spirit of Prophecy give to those who refused to go along with the unfaithful within? Amos 3:3; 2 Cor. 6:17

“It is a solemn statement that I make to the church, that not one in twenty whose names are registered upon the church books are prepared to close their earthly history, and would be as verily without God and without hope in the world as the common sinner. They are professedly serving God, but they are more earnestly serving mammon. This half-and-half work is a constant denying of Christ, rather than a confessing of Christ. So many have brought into the church their own unsubdued spirit, unrefined; their spiritual taste is perverted by their own immoral, debasing corruptions, symbolizing the world in spirit, in heart, in purpose, confirming themselves in lustful practices, and are full of deception through and through in their professed Christian life. Living as sinners, claiming to be Christians! Those who claim to be Christians and will confess Christ should come out from among them and touch not the unclean thing, and be separate.” —*Christian Service*, p. 41.

5. Do the unfaithful company treat their fellow servants favourably? Matt. 24:49

“If we hope to wear the crown, we must expect to bear the cross. Our greatest trials will come from those who profess godliness. It was so with the world’s Redeemer; it will be so with his followers. I should doubt whether I were a child of God, if the world, or even all professed Christians, spoke well of me. Those who are in earnest to win the crown of eternal life need not be surprised or disheartened because at every step toward the heavenly Canaan they meet with obstacles and encounter trials. The opposition which Christ received came from his own nation, who would have been greatly blessed had they accepted him. In like manner the remnant church receive opposition from those who profess to be their brethren.” —*The Review and Herald*, Aug. 28, 1883.

6. How does Scripture explain the meaning of smiting the fellow servant? Jer. 18:18; Ps. 64:3; Isa. 66:5

“As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel’s message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to

misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 608.

WITH THE DRUNKEN

7. Who are the drunken the evil servant is dining with? Rev. 17:6, 2

“When faithful teachers expound the word of God, there arise men of learning, ministers professing to understand the Scriptures, who denounce sound doctrine as heresy, and thus turn away inquirers after truth. Were it not that the world is hopelessly intoxicated with the wine of Babylon, multitudes would be convicted and converted by the plain, cutting truths of the word of God. But religious faith appears so confused and discordant that the people know not what to believe as truth. The sin of the world’s impenitence lies at the door of the church.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 389.

8. Just as alcohol confuses the intellect how is the evil servant affected? Isa. 29:9, 10, 13

“Where are our responsible men at this crisis? Are they living like men who wait for their Lord? Are there not men in the ministry who are indifferent and careless? Are there any among us who are eating and drinking with the drunken? Inebriates are not the special ones here meant; all are included whose senses are so confused and benumbed by the spirit of the times that eternal things are not realized. If there was ever a time when men of God should stand aloof from the corruptions of the world, it is now. The Lord is at hand. Let the trumpet have a certain sound. Let the people be warned.” —*The Review and Herald*, Dec. 20, 1881.

MEDITATION

“That evil servant who said in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming," professed to be waiting for Christ. He was a "servant," outwardly devoted to the service of God while at heart he had yielded to Satan.

“He does not, like the scoffer, openly deny the truth, but reveals in his life the sentiment of the heart—that the Lord’s coming is delayed. Presumption renders him careless of eternal interests. He accepts the world’s maxims and conforms to its customs and practices. Selfishness, worldly pride, and ambitions predominate. Fearing that his brethren may stand higher than himself, he begins to disparage their efforts and impugn their motives. Thus he smites his fellow servants.

“As he alienates himself from the people of God he unites more and more with the ungodly. He is found eating and drinking "with the drunken"—joining with worldlings and partaking of their spirit. Thus he is lulled into a carnal security and overcome by forgetfulness, indifference, and sloth.”
—*Counsels for the Church*, p. 344.

Conflict Among God's Servants

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:30

OBJECTIVES

- To expand on the conflicting activities of the two servants prior to the return of Jesus.
- To find our way safely out of this conflict on the correct side.
- To gain strength to not become discouraged in the conflict.

CONFLICTING MINISTRIES

- 1. What perplexing experiences will those have who are seeking for the truth at the hand of God's servants? Matt. 24:11, 12, 23, 24**

“The law of God is the great moral standard by which character is to be judged. It is the expression of his will, and must be obeyed from the heart. Its holy principles must underlie our course of action in all our business relations. Those who belittle their profession of faith by conformity to the world, show that they despise the riches of the grace of Christ. They cry, "The grace of Christ! we are not saved by works, but by Christ;" but they continue in sin,—continue to transgress the law of God. They act as though they considered it their privilege to live in sin that grace may abound. But every indulgence in sin weakens the soul; it welcomes Satan to come in

and control the mind, making the individual his effectual servant.”
—*The Signs of the Times*, Mar. 27, 1884.

“The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing.” —*Maranatha*, p. 200.

2. Does this perplexing confusion arise from among the various denominations of today, or does it happen in the ranks of Seventh-day Adventism? Acts 20:30; 2 Pet. 2:1

“We have far more to fear from within than from without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world. Unbelievers have a right to expect that those who profess to be keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will do more than any other class to promote and honor, by their consistent lives, by their godly example and their active influence, the cause which they represent. But how often have the professed advocates of the truth proved the greatest obstacle to its advancement! The unbelief indulged, the doubts expressed, the darkness cherished, encourage the presence of evil angels, and open the way for the accomplishment of Satan’s devices.” —*Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 122.

3. Examine the process by which conflicting doctrines and ministries arise within Adventism. Isa. 28:13

“Many will honestly search the Word for Light as those in the past have searched it; and they see light in the Word. But they did not pass over the ground in their experience, when these messages of warning were first

proclaimed. Not having had this experience, some do not appreciate the value of the truths that have been to us as waymarks, and that have made us as a peculiar people what we are. They do not make a right application of the Scriptures, and thus they frame theories that are not correct. It is true that they quote an abundance of Scripture, and teach much that is true; but truth is so mixed with error as to lead to wrong conclusions. Yet because they can weave Scripture into their theories, they think that they have a straight chain of truth. Many who did not have an experience in the rise of the messages, accept these erroneous theories, and are led into false paths, backward instead of forward. This is the enemy's design." —*Selected Messages Book 2*, p. 110.

WAY OF SAFETY

4. In the light of question three, does Scripture identify the principle practised by the true ministry? 2 Tim. 2:14, 15; Col. 2:8

“All who today allow themselves to be used as Satan’s instruments to lead others to disregard the commandments of God are under the curse of God. Our safety lies in a wholehearted belief in a "Thus saith the Lord." This is the declaration of truth. Those who are led away from the truth from any motive, however great may have been their supposed wisdom and exaltation, and venture in a path of their own choosing, are following a false leader and will be led by him into false paths.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 26.

5. If among present corrupted ministries in Adventism we have difficulty to find our way, is there assurance of a faithful earlier ministry we can depend on? Jer. 6:16

“Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith,—the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work, by prayerful study of the Word and by revelation. Upon these foundations we have been building for more than fifty years. Men may suppose that they have found a new way, that they can lay a stronger foundation than that which has been laid; but this is a great deception. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid." [1 Corinthians 3:11.] In the past, many have undertaken to build a new faith, to establish new principles; but how long did their building stand? It soon fell; for it was not founded upon the Rock.”

“Words of power have been sent by God and by Christ to this people, bringing them out from the world, point by point, into the clear light of present truth. With lips touched by holy fire, God’s servants have proclaimed the message. The divine utterance has set its seal to the genuineness of the truth proclaimed.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 307.

MEETING DISCOURAGEMENT

6. How does Inspiration address the discouraging impact of conflict among the ministries of Adventism? Isa. 30:20, 21

“The Christian is enlisted to fight in the cause of God, to be a soldier of Jesus Christ. Jesus fought all our battles during his life upon earth, and in that He was tempted, He knows how to succor those who shall be tempted. We have no power to war with principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, except as we draw strength from Christ. Jesus calls upon you to behold the confederacy of evil, to behold the conflict through which you must pass. He bids us count the cost of standing under the blood-stained banner; He does not flatter us that we shall have no difficulties in this life; but although we shall be tried and tempted in meeting the confederacy of evil, yet we are assured that all the heavenly intelligences will be enlisted on our side in every battle. But the ministry of angels will not ensure us against sorrow and trial. Angels ministered to Jesus; yet their presence did not make his life one of ease, nor free Him from conflict and temptation. While we are engaged in the work which the

Master has appointed us to do, though trials and perplexities and temptations press upon us, we should not be discouraged; for we know that One has endured all these temptations before us.” —*The Bible Echo*, Dec. 1, 1892.

7. Did Jesus have to meet the discouraging experience of church conflicts and how did He comfort Himself? Isa. 49:4, 5

“As the world’s Redeemer, Christ was constantly confronted with apparent failure. He, the messenger of mercy to our world, seemed to do little of the work He longed to do in uplifting and saving. Satanic influences were constantly working to oppose His way. But He would not be discouraged. Through the prophecy of Isaiah He declares, "I have labored in vain, I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God. . . . Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength." It is to Christ that the promise is given, "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth; . . . thus saith the Lord: . . . I will preserve Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that Thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. . . . They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them." Isaiah 49:4, 5, 7-10.

“Upon this word Jesus rested, and He gave Satan no advantage.”
—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 678, 679.

MEDITATION

“In history and prophecy the Word of God portrays the long, continued conflict between truth and error. That conflict is yet in progress. Those things that have been will be repeated. Old controversies will be revived, and new theories will be continually arising. But God’s people, who in

their belief in fulfillment of prophecy have acted a part in the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages, know where they stand. . . . They are to stand firm as a rock, holding the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end.

“A transforming power attended the proclamation of the first and second angels' messages, as it attends the message of the third angel. . . . There was diligent study of the Scriptures, point by point. Almost entire nights were devoted to earnest searching of the Word. We searched for the truth as for hidden treasures. The Lord revealed Himself to us. Light was shed on the prophecies, and we knew that we received divine instruction.”

—*Christ Triumphant*, p. 341.

Eating and Drinking with the Drunken

Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. Isaiah 29:9

OBJECTIVES

- To expand on the meaning of spiritual drunkenness.
- To explore Inspiration regarding apostate Adventist ministers.
- To appreciate the sure consequences of all who submit to their ministry.

SPIRITUAL DRUNKENNESS

- 1. Do we fully understand the baleful effect of false doctrines?
Isa. 29:9; Matt. 15:9**

“Those who engage in the work of God’s cause today will meet just such trials as Paul endured in his work. By the same boastful and deceptive work Satan will seek to draw converts from the faith. Theories will be brought in that will not be wise for us to handle. Satan is a cunning worker, and he will bring in subtle fallacies to darken and confuse the mind and root out the doctrines of salvation. Those who do not accept the Word of God just as it reads, will be snared in his trap. Today we need to speak the truth with holy boldness. The testimony borne to the early church by the Lord’s

messenger, His people are to hear in this time: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8)." —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 7, p. 357.*

2. What is written for those who partake of false doctrines in reference to the nourishment they seek? Deut. 29:19; Isa. 8:20-22

“Many wonder at the unwillingness of the Jews to receive Christ as the promised Messiah. Why did they cling to their false creeds, empty forms, and useless ceremonies, when the truth of heaven waited their acceptance? They spent their money for chaff and husks, when the Living Bread was within their reach. Why did they not go to the word of God, and search diligently to know whether or not they were in error, and to discover to Jesus the absurdity of his claims and the evidences of his deception? The cause of their rejection of Christ was the same as that which keeps men in error today: they "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

“Truth was unpopular in Christ’s day. Truth is unpopular in our day. It has been unpopular ever since Satan first gave man a disrelish for it by presenting bewitching fables that lead to self-exaltation. Do we not meet theories and doctrines today that have no foundation in the word of God? Men cling as tenaciously to them as did the Jews to their traditions and delusions. We have the same difficulties to meet and resist as did the Redeemer of the world.” —*The Review and Herald, Feb. 7, 1888.*

“...living upon husks; they receive no strength, and their souls are as destitute of the love of God as were the hills of Gilboa of dew or rain.” —*The Review and Herald, Aug. 18, 1885.*

3. While so hungry, does a drunken ministry know of its destitution? Where will they eat and drink and feel satisfied? Rev. 3:17; Matt. 24:49 (last half); Hos. 2:5

“As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel’s message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 608.

APOSTATE ADVENTISM

4. Given that the evil servant does not openly deny the coming of Jesus and therefore passes as a Seventh-day Adventist, how does Inspiration unveil him? Isa. 4:1

“The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power,

which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure.” —*Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 204.

5. Having observed the increasing apostasy within the mainstream SDA church, can it be seen what is written regarding the warnings if she would pursue such a course? Rev. 3:16

“Will the churches heed the Laodicean message? Will they repent, or will they, notwithstanding that the most solemn message of truth—the third angel’s message—is being proclaimed to the world, go on in sin? This is the last message of mercy, the last warning to a fallen world. If the church of God becomes lukewarm, it does not stand in favor with God any more than do the churches that are represented as having fallen and become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Those who have had opportunities to hear and receive the truth and who have united with the Seventh-day Adventist church, calling themselves the commandment-keeping people of God, and yet possess no more vitality and consecration to God than do the nominal churches, will receive of the plagues of God just as verily as the churches who oppose the law of God. Only those that are sanctified through the truth will compose the royal family in the heavenly mansions Christ has gone to prepare for those that love Him and keep His commandments.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 19*, p. 176.

CONSEQUENCES FOR ALL CONNECTED

6. For those who remain under such a ministry, does Inspiration throw light upon their future? Jer. 50:6, 7; Ezek. 34:5, 6

“There are many who neglect self-examination. This neglect is positively dangerous. The example of those who receive the words of God to give to the people has a powerful influence. Unless they are sanctified by the truth they profess to believe, they will raise their converts no higher than their own low standard. It is seldom that a people rise higher than the minister. His ways, his words, his faith, his piety, are looked upon as a sample of what the people’s should be. If the people follow the example of the one who has taught them the truth, they think they are doing their duty. Let the minister make the actions of each day a subject of careful thought, that he may know himself. By a close scrutiny of his daily life, let him seek to understand his motives and the principles underlying them. This review of the words and actions is necessary to all who wish to reach perfection of Christian character.” —*The Review and Herald*, July 30, 1901.

“We see the two ministers who have preached to you have departed from the faith, and those whose faith was no higher than the ministers will go where their ministers go and leave their Redeemer and deny the truth, giving heed to seducing spirits. Many, many will depart from the faith they once professed, but those who hold fast the faith, firm unto the end, will be overcomers and shall have the crown of life.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 9*, p. 368.

7. Does God provide any hope for souls under the care of the evil servant? Ezek. 34:11, 12; John 10:16; Jer. 3:14, 15

8. If souls remain under such an apostate ministry, how will ministry and members end up? Deut. 29:20; Matt. 24:50, 51

“Those who had not prized God’s Word were hurrying to and fro, wandering from sea to sea, and from the north to the east, to seek the Word

of the Lord. Said the angel, "They shall not find it. There is a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord. What would they not give for one word of approval from God! but no, they must hunger and thirst on. Day after day have they slighted salvation, prizing earthly riches and earthly pleasure higher than any heavenly treasure or inducement. They have rejected Jesus and despised His saints. The filthy must remain filthy forever." —*Early Writings*, p. 281.

“The ministers of God will have done their last work, offered their last prayers, shed their last bitter tear for a rebellious church and an ungodly people. Their last solemn warning has been given. Oh, then how quickly would houses and lands, dollars that have been miserly hoarded and cherished and tightly grasped, be given for some consolation by those who have professed the truth and have not lived it out, for the way of salvation to be explained, or to hear a hopeful word or a prayer or an exhortation from their ministers. But no, they must hunger and thirst in vain; their thirst will never be quenched, no consolation can they get. Their cases are decided and eternally fixed. It is a fearful, awful time.” —*Last Day Events*, p. 235.

MEDITATION

“Then I saw Jesus lay off His priestly attire and clothe Himself with His most kingly robes. Upon His head were many crowns, a crown within a crown. Surrounded by the angelic host, He left heaven. The plagues were falling upon the inhabitants of the earth. Some were denouncing God and cursing Him. Others rushed to the people of God and begged to be taught how they might escape His judgments. But the saints had nothing for them. The last tear for sinners had been shed, the last agonizing prayer offered, the last burden borne, the last warning given. The sweet voice of mercy was no more to invite them. When the saints, and all heaven, were interested for their salvation, they had no interest for themselves. Life and death had been set before them. Many desired life, but made no effort to obtain it. They did not choose life, and now there was no atoning blood to cleanse the guilty, no compassionate Saviour to plead for them, and cry, "Spare, spare the sinner a little longer." All heaven had united with Jesus, as they heard the fearful words, "It is done. It is finished." The plan of salvation had been accomplished, but few had chosen to accept it. And as mercy's sweet voice died away, fear and horror seized the wicked. With terrible distinctness they heard the words, "Too late! too late!"” —*Early Writings*, p. 281.

unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above. Before the Flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. "So," says the Saviour, "shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:39. Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 491.

“When Jesus leaves the most holy, His restraining Spirit is withdrawn from rulers and people. They are left to the control of evil angels. Then such laws will be made by the counsel and direction of Satan, that unless time should be very short, no flesh could be saved.

“I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues. These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble.” —*Maranatha*, p. 268.

3. How else will the wicked be spending their time during the time of the Lord? Rev. 16:12-16

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the Word of God will fail. It will endure forever. All men, whatever their position, whatever their religion, loyal or disloyal to God, wicked or righteous, are fitting themselves to do their work in the closing scenes of the day of the Lord. They will trample down each other as they act out their natural attributes and fulfill their purposes; but they will carry out the purpose of God. The priests thought that they were carrying out their own purposes, but unconsciously and unintentionally they were fulfilling the purpose of

God. He "revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him." —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 12*, p. 391.

CONCLUDING HARVEST EVENTS

4. What is revealed in Christ's parable of the wheat and the tares? Matt. 13:30, 39; Joel 3:12-14

"I then saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, "Fearful is his work, awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal or bind the wheat for the heavenly garner." These things should engage the whole mind, the whole attention. Again I was shown the necessity of those who believe we are having the last message of mercy, being separate from those who are daily receiving or imbibing new error. I saw that neither young nor old should attend the assemblies of those who are in error and darkness. Said the angel, "Let the mind cease to dwell on things of no profit." —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 5*, p. 425.

"We have reason for ceaseless gratitude to God that Christ, by His perfect obedience, has won back the heaven that Adam lost through disobedience. Adam sinned, and the children of Adam share his guilt and its consequences; but Jesus bore the guilt of Adam, and all the children of Adam that will flee to Christ, the second Adam, may escape the penalty of transgression. Jesus regained heaven for man by bearing the test that Adam failed to endure; for He obeyed the law perfectly, and all who have a right conception of the plan of redemption will see that they cannot be saved while in transgression of God's holy precepts. They must cease to transgress the law and lay hold on the promises of God that are available for us through the merits of Christ." —*Faith and Works*, p. 88.

5. Once the angels have separated the wheat and the tares and probation closes, does the lament of the lost indicate the truth of the unexpected day? Jer. 8:20

“All earthly honor is perishable, all earthly treasures valueless when we are passing from this life. There will be nothing enduring but the heavenly treasure, and the favor of God will be more valuable than choice gold. There is time now to prepare for the future immortal life. It will not answer to neglect the preparation essential for our heavenly home. But many will be found wanting in that great day. The precious hours of probation will have passed by unimproved, and when it is too late the mournful cry will be heard, The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved. When the righteous Judge shall proclaim the destiny of all fixed— "He which is filthy, let him be filthy still...and he that is holy, let him be holy still"—it will be a time when the most careless, the most trifling will come to their senses and discern that the truly wise were those who loved God and kept His commandments.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 19*, p. 192.

ACTIVITIES REGARDING THE TARES

6. Do professing Adventists and Christians still worship and seek God during the day of the Lord? Amos 8:11-13

“The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God.

“The Lord in judgment will at the close of time walk through the earth, the fearful plagues will begin to fall. Then those who have despised God’s word, those who have lightly esteemed it, shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and shall not find it. . . . The ministers of God will have

done their last work, offered their last prayers, shed their last bitter tear for a rebellious church and an ungodly people.” —*Maranatha*, p. 264.

7. During this unexpected day, will lost believers worship with the true believers? Rev. 3:9

“The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus’ new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us who could wash one another’s feet and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet.” —*Early Writings*, p. 15.

PROMISED PROTECTION

8. Are there promises for those who have been watching and have prepared for this time? Isa. 33:14-17

“The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food, they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants. To him that "walketh righteously" is the promise; "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure" (Isaiah 33:15, 16). "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them" (chap. 41:17).” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 372.

The Wise Will Understand

*...and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.
Daniel 12:10*

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the wisdom of the wise prior to and following the close of probation.
- To recognise the connection of the parable of the ten virgins with the coming of Jesus.
- To see how the wise virgins identify with those who are ready for the day of the Lord.

WISE WATCHING

1. How can the wisdom of the wise be defined? Deut. 4:5, 6; Job 28:28; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30

“The love of Christ is a golden chain that binds finite, human beings who believe in Jesus Christ to the Infinite God. The love that the Lord has for His children passeth knowledge. No science can define or explain it. No human wisdom can fathom it.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 173.

2. As this wisdom is from God, did Jesus make a connection of this with the wise virgins of His parable? Matt. 25:5

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

“Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 408.

3. Character being formed via the Holy Spirit, what then do the wise watchers engage in to be ready for the close of probation? Dan. 12:10

“The day is coming, and it is close upon us, when every phase of character will be revealed by special temptation. Those who remain true to principle, who exercise faith to the end, will be those who have proved true under test and trial during the previous hours of their probation, and have formed characters after the likeness of Christ. It will be those who have cultivated close acquaintance with Christ who, through His wisdom and grace, are partakers of the divine nature. But no human being can give to another, heart devotion and noble qualities of mind, and supply his deficiencies with moral power.

“Let no one put off the day of preparation, lest the call be made, "Go forth to meet the bridegroom," and you be found as were the foolish virgins, with no oil in your vessels with your lamps.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 350.

THE PARABLE

4. How can we recognise that Christ gave the parable of the ten virgins to describe the lesson He was seeking to convey in Matthew 24:42-44? Matt. 25:13

“Let none follow the example of the foolish virgins and think that it will be safe to wait until the crisis comes before gaining a preparation of character to stand in that time. It will be too late to seek for the righteousness of Christ when the guests are called in and examined. Now is the time to put on the righteousness of Christ—the wedding garment that will fit you to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb. In the parable, the foolish virgins are represented as begging for oil and failing to receive it at their request. This is symbolic of those who have not prepared themselves by developing a character to stand in a time of crisis.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 350.

5. What is another connection manifest between Matthew chapter 24 and the parable? Matt. 24:45; 25:6

“Jesus has left us this warning: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping." 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.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 2*, p. 205.

6. In consideration of the answer to question five, can we recognise who gives the midnight cry of the arrival of the bridegroom? Isa. 21:11, 12

“The Lord is soon coming. The watchmen on the walls of Zion are called upon to awake to their God-given responsibility. Many of them are in the stupor of insensibility. God calls for watchmen who in the power of the Spirit will give to the world a warning message; who will proclaim the time of night. He calls for watchmen who will arouse men and women from their lethargy, lest they sleep the sleep of death.” —*Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 323.

“Angels were sent to aid the mighty angel from heaven, and I heard voices which seemed to sound everywhere, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." This message seemed to be an addition to the third message, joining it as the midnight cry joined the second angel's message in 1844. The glory of God rested upon the patient, waiting saints, and they fearlessly gave the last solemn warning, proclaiming the fall of Babylon and calling upon God's people to come out of her that they might escape her fearful doom.” —*Early Writings*, p. 277.

THE BRIDAL PARTY

7. Recognising that the faithful and wise servant gives the right message at the right time and logically is the watchman that gives the call of the coming bridegroom, how does the parable symbolise this? Matt. 28:20 (last half)

“All the virgins are watching for the bridegroom. Hour after hour passes, and they are still anxiously looking for his appearing. But at last the weary, watching ones fall asleep. And at midnight, the very darkest hour, when their lamps are most needed, the cry is heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

“At the call, the sleeping eyes are opened, and every one is aroused. They see the procession they are to join moving on, bright with torches and glad with music. They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. The five wise virgins trim their lamps, and go forth to meet the bridegroom.” —*The Review and Herald*, October 31, 1899.

**8. Do we discern that the wise servant and the wise virgins describe those who are not taken by surprise as to the day of the Lord?
1 Thess. 5:4-6**

“Those who have been members of the same family are separated. A mark is placed upon the righteous. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Those who have been obedient to God's commandments will unite with the company of the saints in light.”
—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 234.

Going Forth to Meet the Bridegroom

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Matthew 25:1

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the meaning of going forth to meet the bridegroom.
- To appreciate the anticipation in the hearts of the ten virgins.
- To gain an understanding of the ten virgins.

GOING FORTH

- 1. What was the event that Jesus announced prophetically by which believers would be prompted to go forth to meet Him? Matt. 24:29-31; Rev. 6:12-14**

“The parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25 also illustrates the experience of the Adventist people. In Matthew 24, in answer to the question of His disciples concerning the sign of His coming and of the end of the world, Christ had pointed out some of the most important events in the history of the world and of the church from His first to His second advent; namely, the destruction of Jerusalem, the great tribulation of the church under the pagan and papal persecutions, the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars. After this He spoke of His coming in His kingdom, and related the parable describing the two classes of

servants who look for His appearing. Chapter 25 opens with the words: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." Here is brought to view the church living in the last days, the same that is pointed out in the close of chapter 24. In this parable their experience is illustrated by the incidents of an Eastern marriage." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 393.

2. How did the falling of the stars impact the believers? Rev. 6:13

“Thus was displayed the last of those signs of His coming, concerning which Jesus bade His disciples: "When ye shall see all these things, *know* that it is near, even at the doors." Matthew 24:33. After these signs, John beheld, as the great event next impending, the heavens departing as a scroll, while the earth quaked, mountains and islands removed out of their places, and the wicked in terror sought to flee from the presence of the Son of man. Revelation 6:12-17.

“Many who witnessed the falling of the stars, looked upon it as a herald of the coming judgment, "an awful type, a sure forerunner, a merciful sign, of that great and dreadful day."—"The Old Countryman," in *Portland Evening Advertiser*, November 26, 1833. Thus the attention of the people was directed to the fulfillment of prophecy, and many were led to give heed to the warning of the second advent.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 334.

3. As the believers recognised the signs, how did they respond? Amos 4:12

“The coming of Christ, as announced by the first angel’s message, was understood to be represented by the coming of the bridegroom. The widespread reformation under the proclamation of His soon coming, answered to the going forth of the virgins.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 393.

ONGOING ANTICIPATION

4. With what yearning hope did the believers who witnessed those signs go forth to meet the bridegroom? Rev. 22:20; Ps. 84:2

“Those who sincerely love Jesus can appreciate the feelings of those who watched with the most intense longing for the coming of their Saviour. The point of expectation was nearing. The time when we hoped to meet Him was close at hand. We approached this hour with a calm solemnity. The true believers rested in a sweet communion with God—an earnest of the peace that was to be theirs in the bright hereafter. None who experienced this hope and trust can ever forget those precious hours of waiting.

“Worldly business was for the most part laid aside for a few weeks. We carefully examined every thought and emotion of our hearts, as if upon our deathbeds and in a few hours to close our eyes forever upon earthly scenes. There was no making of "ascension robes" for the great event; we felt the need of internal evidence that we were prepared to meet Christ, and our white robes were purity of soul, character cleansed from sin by the atoning blood of our Saviour.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 1, p. 51.*

5. Was the parable of the coming bridegroom applicable for the believers at that time? Dan. 7:13, 14; Mal. 3:1

“The proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," in the summer of 1844, led thousands to expect the immediate advent of the Lord. At the appointed time the Bridegroom came, not to the earth, as the people expected, but to the Ancient of Days in heaven, to the marriage, the

reception of His kingdom. "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut." They were not to be present in person at the marriage; for it takes place in heaven, while they are upon the earth. The followers of Christ are to "wait for their Lord, when He will *return from* the wedding." Luke 12:36. But they are to understand His work, and to follow Him by faith as He goes in before God. It is in this sense that they are said to go in to the marriage.

"In the parable it was those that had oil in their vessels with their lamps that went in to the marriage. Those who, with a knowledge of the truth from the Scriptures, had also the Spirit and grace of God, and who, in the night of their bitter trial, had patiently waited, searching the Bible for clearer light—these saw the truth concerning the sanctuary in heaven and the Saviour's change in ministration, and by faith they followed Him in His work in the sanctuary above. And all who through the testimony of the Scriptures accept the same truths, following Christ by faith as He enters in before God to perform the last work of mediation, and at its close to receive His kingdom—all these are represented as going in to the marriage."
—*The Great Controversy*, p. 427.

**6. Does that midnight cry and the saints ever since 1844 going forth to join the bridal party, still apply all along to our time?
Rev. 18:1-4**

"Our hopes now centered on the coming of the Lord in 1844. This was also the time for the message of the second angel, who, flying through the midst of heaven, cried: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city." That message was first proclaimed by the servants of God in the summer of 1844. As a result, many left the fallen churches. In connection with this message the midnight cry [See Matthew 25:1-13.] was given: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." In every part of the land, light was given concerning this message, and the cry aroused thousands. It went from city to city, from village to village, and into the remote country regions. It reached the learned and talented, as well as the obscure and humble."
—*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 1*, p. 53.

“I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth. I turned to look for the advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, "Look again, and look a little higher." At this I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the advent people were traveling to the city which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the "midnight cry." This light shone all along the path, and gave light for their feet, so that they might not stumble.” —*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 64.

“Angels were sent to aid the mighty angel from heaven, and I heard voices which seemed to sound everywhere, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." This message seemed to be an addition to the third message, joining it as the midnight cry joined the second angel’s message in 1844. The glory of God rested upon the patient, waiting saints, and they fearlessly gave the last solemn warning, proclaiming the fall of Babylon and calling upon God’s people to come out of her that they might escape her fearful doom.” —*Early Writings*, p. 277.

THE TEN VIRGINS

7. Who do the ten virgins represent? Matt. 22:14; Rom. 1:5, 6

“We see that the professed believers will be represented by the ten virgins, five of whom were wise, and five were foolish.” —*1888 Materials*, p. 1455.

MEDITATION

“The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom

to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 207.

SECTION 2

**THE PARABOLIC
DESCRIPTION**

Introduction

HAVING spent the last three months in the study of Matthew twenty four, we have come to appreciate the counsels of Jesus for those living just before His second coming. We came to understand that He was referring to the close of probation by stating that His coming would be as a thief, that we should be watching not to be taken by surprise.

In Matthew twenty five Jesus continues on the same subject by saying, “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.” Here it is evident that this parable was given to describe the experience of the church during the period of time that has occupied our study for the past three months.

For the next three months we will respond to the counsel given in the Spirit of Prophecy as follows:

“Many who went forth to meet the Bridegroom under the messages of the first and second angels, refused the third, the last testing message to be given to the world, and a similar position will be taken when the last call is made.

“Every specification of this parable should be carefully studied. We are represented either by the wise or by the foolish virgins. There are many who will not remain at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him. They have not a knowledge of his ways; they are not prepared for his coming. They have made a pretense of waiting for their Lord. They have not watched and prayed with that faith which works by love and purifies the soul. They have lived a life of carelessness. They have heard and assented to the truth, but they have never brought it into their practical life. The oil of grace is not feeding their lamps, and they are not prepared to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb. The oil is the holy grace that is sent from heaven; and there must be an inward adorning with that

grace, if we would stand when he appears.” —*The Review and Herald*, Oct. 31, 1899.

May God draw near to us as we pursue this in-depth study. Let us diligently apply ourselves to meet the condition of the wise virgins and recognise the bridal party which we should be part of.

Parable Background

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Matthew 25:1

OBJECTIVES

- To secure to our understanding that this parable is in verity given to enlarge the words of Matthew 24:32-51.
- To explore Inspiration for the time period this parable covers.
- To prepare our minds to receive the practicality of this entire lesson that we may have the preparation needed to enter in and partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

PARABLE CONNECTIONS

- 1. How can it be proven that the parable of the ten virgins is connected with Christ's warning to be ready for the unexpected coming? Matt. 24:42-44; 25:13**

- 2. What other connecting words reveal that the study of this parable is part of the study of Christ's words of Matthew 24? Matt. 24:44, 45; 25:1**

“The parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25 also illustrates the experience of the Adventist people. In Matthew 24, in answer to the question of His disciples concerning the sign of His coming and of the end of the world, Christ had pointed out some of the most important events in the history of the world and of the church from His first to His second advent; namely, the destruction of Jerusalem, the great tribulation of the church under the pagan and papal persecutions, the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars. After this He spoke of His coming in His kingdom, and related the parable describing the two classes of servants who look for His appearing. Chapter 25 opens with the words: “*Then* shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.” Here is brought to view the church living in the last days, the same that is pointed out in the close of chapter 24. In this parable their experience is illustrated by the incidents of an Eastern marriage.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 393.

THE TIMING

3. Do the words of Inspiration clearly locate the commencement of this parable, the time it was first applicable? Rev. 14:6-8

“Our hopes now centered on the coming of the Lord in 1844. This was also the time for the message of the second angel, who, flying through the midst of heaven, cried: “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city.” That message was first proclaimed by the servants of God in the summer of 1844. As a result, many left the fallen churches. In connection with this message the midnight cry [See Matthew 25:1-13.] was given: “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.” In every part of the land, light was given concerning this message, and the cry aroused thousands. It went from city to city, from village to village, and into the remote country regions. It reached the learned and talented, as well as the obscure and humble.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 1*, p. 53.

4. How important is it to recognise the correct time location of prophecy? Luke 19:41, 42; Dan. 9:24, 27

“In this our day, as in Christ’s day, there will be a misreading and misinterpreting of the Scriptures. If the Jews had studied the Scriptures with earnest, prayerful, humble hearts, their searching would have been rewarded with a true knowledge of the time, and not only the time, but also the manner of Christ’s first appearing. They would not have ascribed the glories of the second appearing of Christ to His first advent. They had the testimony of Daniel; they had the testimony of Isaiah and other prophets; they had the teaching of Moses; and here was Christ Himself in their midst, and still they were searching the Scriptures for evidence in regard to His coming. They were doing to Christ, at the same time, the very things that it had been prophesied they would do. They were so blinded that they knew not the time of His visitation, or what they were doing. Thus they were fulfilling the Scripture.

“Many are doing the same thing today . . . because they have not had experience in the testing message comprehended in the first, second, and third angels’ messages. There are those who are searching the Scriptures for proof that these messages are still in the future. They gather together the truthfulness of the messages, but they fail to give them their proper place in prophetic history. Therefore such are in danger of misleading the people in regard to locating the messages. They do not see and understand the time of the end, or when to locate the messages. . . . The watchman is to know the time of the night. Everything is now clothed with a solemnity that all who believe the truth should feel and sense. . . . All the little things of life are but a mote now. Those that pertain to eternity are of great consequence.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 368.

5. Are the three angels’ messages applicable to the same period of the parable of the ten virgins? Rev. 14:9, 14

“The first and second angels’ messages are united and made complete in the third. -John says: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

“Under the proclamation of these messages the cry was made, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." The believers in these messages were compelled to go out from the churches because they preached the second appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven. The whole world was to hear the message, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Many who heard these messages thought they would live to see Christ come; but there was a delay in the coming of the Bridegroom, in order that all might have an opportunity to hear the last message of mercy to a fallen world.”
—*The Review and Herald*, Oct. 31, 1899.

PREPARATION NEEDED

6. In our study of this lesson where is to be the focus of our attention in preparation? Ezek. 33:31, 32; Rom. 2:13

“Every specification of this parable should be carefully studied. We are represented either by the wise or by the foolish virgins. There are many who will not remain at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him. They have not a knowledge of his ways; they are not prepared for his coming. They have made a pretense of waiting for their Lord. They have not watched and prayed with that faith which works by love and purifies the soul. They have lived a life of carelessness. They have heard and assented to the truth, but they have never brought it into their practical life. The oil of grace is not feeding their lamps, and they are not prepared to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb. The oil is the holy grace that is sent from heaven; and there must be an inward adorning with that grace, if we would stand when he appears.” —*The Review and Herald*, Oct. 31, 1899.

7. Does Inspiration highlight the priority of the practical elements of Bible religion? James 1:22-25

“Let the church become united in Christ Jesus in working for purity and perfection of character. There needs to be a practical daily sanctification of the spirit. Before one is prepared for Christ’s coming there must be seen in the life the fruits of the Spirit. There must be a self-discipline, a wrestling with God for victory till the victory is gained. Then will ascend a shout of praise to God.” —*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 12, 1907.

8. How wide-ranging is this practical application to Bible religion? Matt. 5:43-48

“If when Christ comes the second time, they are as they are now—harsh in words, coarse in spirit, destitute of Christian love—their candlestick will be removed out of its place. They will be unready to meet their Lord. Oh, that they would feel the necessity of putting on the Lord Jesus! Oh, that they would seek to understand what is due from man to God!

“I tell you in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, that there must be an individual reformation. Unless men reveal Christlikeness in all their dealings with their fellow men, unless they obey the law of heaven in every particular, they will never enter the city of God. There is no excuse for anyone to fail. Christ’s character is before all, for study and imitation.

“When, like Christ, men manifest good will toward men, the truth will sanctify the soul. But preaching the truth while the practice is corrupt makes the truth of none effect. God is dishonored by those who honor Him in theory only.

“If one does a piece of work which is not wholly perfect, shall his brethren pull it to pieces, speaking of it scathingly and contemptuously? The one who has made mistakes may be doing his very best. Did Christ treat the work of His disciples thus? If He should treat erring human beings as their shortcomings deserve, what would become of them? Well may every mortal say, "Let me fall into the hands of the living God, rather than into the hands of men." God is too wise to err, and too good to do us harm.”

—*Manuscript Releases Vol. 14*, p. 350.

The Marriage

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son. Matthew 22:2

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the relationship of Christ with His church.
- To clarify the difference between the members of the church and the church body system.
- To study the meaning of the marriage, ceremony and reception in the parables.

THE BRIDE

1. Does the Bible make any comparisons of God's people with human gender? Jer. 6:2; Isa. 51:16; Rev. 12:1, 2

2. What is the relationship Jesus has with His church? Ezek. 16:7, 8; Isa. 62:5 (last part); Rev. 22:17

“Christ honored the marriage relation by making it also a symbol of the union between Him and His redeemed ones. He Himself is the

Bridegroom; the bride is the church, of which, as His chosen one, He says, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 26.

**3. How are we to understand the church as being Christ's bride?
1 Cor. 12:27, 28; Heb. 12:22, 23**

“Christ taught that His church is a spiritual kingdom. He Himself, "the Prince of peace," is the head of His church. In His person humanity, inhabited by divinity, was represented to the world. The great end of His mission was to be a sin-offering for the world, that by the shedding of blood an atonement might be made for the whole race of men. With a heart ever touched with the feelings of our infirmities, an ear ever open to the cry of suffering humanity, a hand ever ready to save the discouraged and despairing, Jesus, our Saviour, "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).”
—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 14.

THE CHURCH A KINGDOM

4. Having understood the church to be the kingdom of Jesus with its headquarters in heaven's city, does Scripture convey this to be Christ's bride? Rev. 21:9-11, 2

5. Does the church, being a collective body of people, governed as a kingdom is governed, also convey an alternative imagery? Matt. 22:2, 10; Song 2:3, 4

“The Lord God has provided a banquet for the whole human race. It is represented in the parable as a great supper where there is provided a festival for every soul. All connected with this supper may enjoy the heavenly feast, which is the gospel. This feast is open to all who will receive it. All are invited and urged to come. . . .

“All who are partakers of the wedding feast, the gospel feast, by this act say that they have accepted Christ as their personal Saviour. They wear His distinguishing dress. They have accepted the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the robe of Christ’s righteousness. Only those do honor to Christ who accept the invitation, “Come, for all things are now ready; come to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” These put on the white linen, the clean, pure character, showing that they no longer live their old citizen life that they lived in their ignorance. Their speech is changed. Their conversation is in altogether another line.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 304.

6. In the parable of the ten virgins, do we discern a distinction in which the church members can constitute both bride and guests?

“Clearly, then, the bride represents the Holy City, and the virgins that go out to meet the bridegroom are a symbol of the church. In the Revelation the people of God are said to be the guests at the marriage supper. Revelation 19:9. If *guests*, they cannot be represented also as the *bride*. Christ, as stated by the prophet Daniel, will receive from the Ancient of Days in heaven, “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom;” He will receive the New Jerusalem, the capital of His kingdom, “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Daniel 7:14; Revelation 21:2. Having received the kingdom, He will come in His glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords, for the redemption of His people, who are to “sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,” at His table in His kingdom (Matthew 8:11; Luke 22:30), to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 426.

“This parable is not a representation of open sinners, but of those who profess Christ. The bride is the church who is waiting for the second appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” —*The Review and Herald*, Oct. 31, 1899.

THE MARRIAGE

7. In which way does Inspiration reveal the marriage of Christ to His bride? Dan. 7:9, 10, 13, 14

“In the summer and autumn of 1844 the proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," was given. The two classes represented by the wise and foolish virgins were then developed—one class who looked with joy to the Lord's appearing, and who had been diligently preparing to meet Him; another class that, influenced by fear and acting from impulse, had been satisfied with a theory of the truth, but were destitute of the grace of God. In the parable, when the bridegroom came, "they that were ready went in with him to the marriage." The coming of the bridegroom, here brought to view, takes place before the marriage. The marriage represents the reception by Christ of His kingdom. The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, which is the capital and representative of the kingdom, is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Said the angel to John: "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." "He carried me away in the spirit," says the prophet, "and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Revelation 21:9, 10. Clearly, then, the bride represents the Holy City, and the virgins that go out to meet the bridegroom are a symbol of the church. In the Revelation the people of God are said to be the guests at the marriage supper. Revelation 19:9. If *guests*, they cannot be represented also as the *bride*. Christ, as stated by the prophet Daniel, will receive from the Ancient of Days in heaven, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom;" He will receive the New Jerusalem, the capital of His kingdom, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Daniel 7:14; Revelation 21:2. Having received the kingdom, He will come in His glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords, for the redemption of His people, who are to "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," at His table in His kingdom (Matthew 8:11; Luke 22:30), to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 426.

8. In the light of the answer of question seven, do we understand the time of the marriage in contrast to the time of the marriage supper? Matt. 25:10

“The proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," in the summer of 1844, led thousands to expect the immediate advent of the Lord. At the appointed time the Bridegroom came, not to the earth, as the people expected, but to the Ancient of Days in heaven, to the marriage, the reception of His kingdom. "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut." They were not to be present in person at the marriage; for it takes place in heaven, while they are upon the earth. The followers of Christ are to "wait for their Lord, when He will *return from* the wedding." Luke 12:36. But they are to understand His work, and to follow Him by faith as He goes in before God. It is in this sense that they are said to go in to the marriage.”

“Having received the kingdom, He will come in His glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords, for the redemption of His people, who are to "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," at His table in His kingdom (Matthew 8:11; Luke 22:30), to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb.”
—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 427, 426.

MEDITATION

“In both the Old and the New Testament, the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people. To the mind of Jesus the gladness of the wedding festivities pointed forward to the rejoicing of that day when He shall bring home His bride to the Father’s house, and the redeemed with the Redeemer shall sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb. He says, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; . . . but thou shalt be called My Delight; . . . for the Lord delighteth in thee." "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." Isaiah 62:5, 4, margin; Zephaniah 3:17. When the vision of heavenly things was granted to John the apostle, he wrote: "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice

of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Revelation 19:6, 7, 9." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 151.

Company in the Light

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Matthew 25:6

OBJECTIVES

- To observe three companies of believers in the parable of the ten virgins.
- To determine the identity of the bridal party.
- To appreciate the importance for the individual believer to recognise the company in the light for the purpose of joining it.

THE THREE COMPANIES

1. Who wakened the sleeping virgins in the parable? Matt. 25:6; 24:45, 46

“Because we know not the exact time of His coming, we are commanded to watch. “Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching.” Luke 12:37. Those who watch for the Lord’s coming are not waiting in idle expectancy. The expectation of Christ’s coming is to make men fear the Lord, and fear His judgments upon transgression. It is to awaken them to the great sin of rejecting His offers of mercy. Those who are watching for the Lord are purifying their souls by obedience to the truth. With vigilant watching they combine earnest working. Because they know that the Lord is at the door, their zeal is quickened to co-operate with the divine intelligences in working for the salvation of souls. These are the faithful and wise servants who give to the Lord’s household “their portion

of meat in due season." Luke 12:42. They are declaring the truth that is now specially applicable. As Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses each declared the truth for his time, so will Christ's servants now give the special warning for their generation." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 634.

2. Can we discern that faithful company of servants in the parable?

Matt. 25:6, 7, 10

“By torchlight the bridal party proceed from her father’s house to his own, where a feast is provided for the invited guests. In the scene upon which Christ looks, a company are awaiting the appearance of the bridal party, intending to join the procession.

“Lingering near the bride’s house are ten young women robed in white. Each carries a lighted lamp and a small flagon for oil. All are anxiously watching for the appearance of the bridegroom. But there is a delay. Hour after hour passes; the watchers become weary and fall asleep. At midnight the cry is heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." The sleepers, suddenly awaking, spring to their feet. They see the procession moving on, bright with torches and glad with music. They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 405.

3. Do the sleeping virgins represent the church that is awake doing its work? Is the bridal party sleeping? Matt. 25:5; 1 Thess. 5:4-6

“The Son of God went away the second time, and prayed, saying: "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." And again He came to His disciples and found them sleeping.

Their eyes were heavy. By these sleeping disciples is represented a sleeping church, when the day of God's visitation is nigh. It is a time of clouds and thick darkness, when to be found asleep is most perilous.

“Jesus has left us this warning: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping." 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.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 2*, p. 205.

4. Of those who slumbered and slept, do we see a difference between one kind of sleeper and another? Matt. 25:1-5

“When the ten virgins went forth to meet the bridegroom, their lamps were trimmed and burning. Apparently there was no difference between the five who were wise and the five who were foolish. To outward appearance all were prepared, robed in white, and carrying their lighted lamps. But only five of these virgins were wise. These anticipated delay, and filled their flagons with oil, ready for any emergency. Five of the number had not this foresight; they made no provision for disappointment or delay.” —*The Review and Herald*, Oct. 31, 1899.

5. How are the three companies of believers distinguished one from the other? Ezek. 33:7; Isa. 21:11, 12; Matt. 25:3, 4

“The Lord is soon coming. The watchmen on the walls of Zion are called upon to awake to their God-given responsibilities. God calls for watchmen who, in the power of the Spirit, will give to the world the last warning message; who will proclaim the time of night. He calls for watchmen who will arouse men and women from their lethargy, lest they sleep the sleep of death.” —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 327.

THE BRIDAL PARTY

6. Observing from the previous questions that the bridal party is initially distinct from the ten virgins, does Inspiration reveal more regarding this company? Song 6:8-10; Matt. 28:20

“God has a distinct people, a church on earth, second to none, but superior to all in their facilities to teach the truth, to vindicate the law of God. God has divinely appointed agencies—men whom He is leading, who have borne the heat and burden of the day, who are cooperating with heavenly instrumentalities to advance the kingdom of Christ in our world. Let all unite with these chosen agents, and be found at last among those who have the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus.” —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 240.

7. How is this company identified just before the close of probation? Rev. 14:12; 12:17

“Said the angel, “List ye!” Soon I heard a voice like many musical instruments all sounding in perfect strains, sweet and harmonious. It surpassed any music I had ever heard, seeming to be full of mercy, compassion, and elevating, holy joy. It thrilled through my whole being. Said the angel, “Look ye!” My attention was then turned to the company I

had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying in agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order, like a company of soldiers. Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude and holy, sacred joy.”

“I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly laid hold upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, “It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.”
—*Early Writings*, pp. 270, 271.

8. Does the parable of the ten virgins reveal the experience of the faithful believers joining this company? Matt. 25:10

“While they went to buy, the procession moved on, and left them behind. The five with lighted lamps joined the throng and entered the house with the bridal train, and the door was shut. When the foolish virgins reached the banqueting hall, they received an unexpected denial. The master of the feast declared, “I know you not.” They were left standing without, in the empty street, in the blackness of the night.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 406.

“At the call, the sleeping eyes are opened, and every one is aroused. They see the procession they are to join moving on, bright with torches and glad with music. They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. The five wise virgins trim their lamps, and go forth to meet the bridegroom.”
—*The Review and Herald*, Oct. 31, 1899.

“Those who have been members of the same family are separated. A mark is placed upon the righteous. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Those who have been obedient to God’s commandments will unite with the company of the saints in light; they shall enter in through the gates into the city, and have right to the tree of life. The one shall be taken. His name shall stand in the book of life, while those with whom he associated shall have the mark of eternal separation from God.” —*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 234.

MEDITATION

☞ Is it right to be sleeping now?

“How can a Christian sleep in such an age as we are now living in? Knowledge has increased, and facilities are increased for attaining great results for God and humanity. Then we see so many fields opening before us, inviting those of strong faith, and hope, and courage to enter them and secure the harvest.

“Is there a Christian whose pulse does not beat with quickened action as he anticipates the great events already opening before us? The Lord is coming. We hear the footsteps of an approaching God, as he comes to punish the world for their iniquity. We are to prepare the way for him by acting our part to get a people ready for that great day; and to sleep now is a fearful crime.”
—*The Home Missionary*, Nov. 1, 1897.

Ten Virgins

*These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.
Revelation 14:4*

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the meaning of virgins in Bible symbolism.
- To expand on the application of the ten virgins to the people of God in the last days.
- To discover the formation of the 144,000 from the parable.

VIRGINS SYMBOLISM

- 1. Find scriptural references in which virgins are given as a symbol for God's people. Rev. 14:4; Isa. 37:22; Amos 5:1-3; 2 Cor. 11:2**

“The parable of the talents is given to represent the kingdom of heaven, and to show the necessity of an accurate use of the endowments that God has entrusted to us. It is of the highest importance that we understand these parables and know wherein they have any bearing upon us individually. The ten virgins are represented as watching in the evening of this earth's history. They represent the church of professed Christians. This lesson should fill our minds with serious thought, and drive us to our Bibles, the Word of the living God. It should lead us to most earnest supplication that God will lead us into all truth.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 16, p. 271.*

- 2. Considering the ten virgins of the parable, is there any significance in the representation of the figures ten and fives? Isa. 1:9; Matt. 25:2**

“We see that the professed believers will be represented by the ten virgins, five of whom were wise, and five were foolish. I fear this is the average the Lord saw of those that would be ready and unready. But a small number of those who have had great light and abundant opportunities and continuous privileges have anything more than a theoretical knowledge of the truth. Many think that such a knowledge is all that is required. They are not doers of the word.” —*1888 Materials*, p. 1455.

LAST DAYS APPLICATION

- 3. How specifically did Jesus use this parable for individual believers living in the last days, just before His return? Matt. 24:42; 25:1; Luke 21:34-36**

“As Christ sat looking upon the party that waited for the bridegroom, He told His disciples the story of the ten virgins, by their experience illustrating the experience of the church that shall live just before His second coming.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 406.

- 4. What was the span of time in which the ten virgins represented the experience of individual believers? Dan. 8:14; 7:13; Mal. 3:1**

“The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25.

“In the summer and autumn of 1844 the proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," was given. The two classes represented by the wise and foolish virgins were then developed...”

“When the work of investigation shall be ended, when the cases of those who in all ages have professed to be followers of Christ have been examined and decided, then, and not till then, probation will close, and the door of mercy will be shut. Thus in the one short sentence, "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut," we are carried down through the Saviour’s final ministration, to the time when the great work for man’s salvation shall be completed.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 426, 428.

5. Can we find Bible references that allude to the ten virgins during that span of time? Rev. 14:4; Dan. 12:9, 10, 3, 4; Mal. 3:2, 3

FORMATION OF THE 144,000

6. What else is written concerning the believers during that span of time? Rev. 7:1-4; Ezek. 9:1-4

“If such scenes as this are to come, such tremendous judgments on a guilty world, where will be the refuge for God’s people? How will they be sheltered until the indignation be overpast? John sees the elements of nature—earthquake, tempest, and political strife—represented as being held by four angels. These winds are under control until God gives the word to let them go. There is the safety of God’s church. The angels of God do His bidding, holding back the winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree, until the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads. The mighty angel is seen ascending from the east (or sunrising). This mightiest of angels has in his hand the seal of the living God, or of Him who alone can give life, who can inscribe upon the foreheads the mark or inscription, to whom shall be granted immortality, eternal life. It is the voice of this highest angel that had authority to command the four angels to keep in check the four winds until this work was performed, and until he should give the summons to let them loose.”

“This sealing of the servants of God is the same that was shown to Ezekiel in vision.” —*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 444, 445.

7. Is there a connection between the sealing of the 144,000 and the distinction between the wise and foolish virgins? Matt. 24:50, 51; 25:10-12

“The command is: "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." These sighing, crying ones had been holding forth the words of life; they had reproved, counseled, and entreated. Some who had been dishonoring God repented and humbled their hearts before Him. But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel; although many still continued the forms of religion, His power and presence were lacking.

“In the time when His wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world

by their soul anguish, which is expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God's honor and a love for souls will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls are vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. They are powerless to stop the rushing torrent of iniquity, and hence they are filled with grief and alarm. They mourn before God to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church. The Spirit of God, which prompts to reproof, is trampled underfoot, while the servants of Satan triumph. God is dishonored, the truth made of none effect." —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5, p. 210.*

Five Wise Virgins

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein. Hosea 14:9

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the wisdom of the wise.
- To identify the specific wisdom of the five wise virgins.
- To show their wisdom in recognising the bridal party – company in the light.

WISDOM

- 1. What is wisdom according to Bible inspiration? Prov. 9:10; 15:2; Deut. 4:5, 6**

“The wisdom and understanding of ancient Israel before all the nations, was their obedience to God’s law. This doing of God’s commandments worked an elevation of character and life that even the heathen world recognized and commended. Those who have rendered obedience to God in all ages, have been transformed in character, and in these last days, when iniquity abounds on every hand, our wisdom and understanding before all people will consist in our obedience to the standard of righteousness. The servants of God will not be foolish, ignorant, uncourteous, and coarse; but as they conform their lives to the holy laws of Heaven, they become like Jesus Christ, who was a living example of perfect obedience to the statutes of Jehovah. They will become refined, ennobled, elevated, and will

manifest that courtesy that forgets the interests of self, that others may be blessed and benefited.” —*The Signs of the Times*, Jan. 6, 1888.

2. As we acknowledge that wisdom is obtained in the Bible and its laws, where then does true wisdom come from? Prov. 23:4 (last half); 2:6, 7; 16:1

“In these last days we need a large and increasing faith. We need to be established in the faith by a knowledge and wisdom not derived from any human source, but which is found only in the riches of the wisdom of God.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 349.

SPECIFIC LAST-DAYS WISDOM

3. How was the wisdom of the five wise virgins exposed in the parable? Matt. 25:3, 4

“Now is the time to look to it that we have on hand an abundant supply of the oil of the grace of Christ. It was the wisdom of the wise virgins in supplying themselves with oil that made the difference between their fate and that of the foolish virgins, who had neglected to keep oil in their vessels with their lamps.” —*The Signs of the Times*, Aug. 6, 1894.

4. Is it enough to have the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy writings and rely on our own unassisted minds to gain the wisdom contained therein? John 16:12-15

“It is not enough to study the Bible as other books are studied. In order for it to be understood savingly, the Holy Spirit must move on the heart of the searcher. The same Spirit that inspired the Word must inspire the reader of the Word. Then will be heard the voice of heaven. . . .

“The mere reading of the Word will not accomplish the result designed of heaven; it must be studied and cherished in the heart. The knowledge of God is not gained without mental effort. We should diligently study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His Word. We should take one verse and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell on the thought till it becomes our own, and we know "what saith the Lord."” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 138.

5. As the Laodicean condition is described in Revelation 3, for the church in the last days, can we discern the position of the five wise virgins in contrast to the others? Rev. 3:17-21

“Whatever path God chooses for us, whatever way He ordains for our feet, that is the only path of safety. We are daily to cherish a spirit of childlike submission, and pray that our eyes may be anointed with the heavenly eyesalve in order that we may discern the indications of the divine will, lest we become confused in our ideas, because our will seems to be all-controlling. With the eye of faith, with childlike submission as obedient children, we must look to God, to follow His guidance, and difficulties will clear away. The promise is, "I will instruct thee and teach thee . . . : I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalm 32:8). . . .

“If we come to God in a humble and teachable spirit, not with our plans all formed before we ask Him, and shaped according to our own will, but in submission, in willingness to be taught, in faith, it is our privilege to claim the promise every hour of the day. We may distrust ourselves, and we need to guard against our own inclinations and strong tendencies lest we shall follow our mind and plans and think it is the way of the Lord.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 249.

RECOGNISING WISDOM

6. Why is Bible wisdom needed to recognise the company in the light? Matt. 25:6, 7; 24:23-25

“[Revelation 18:1-3, quoted.] While this message is sounding, while the proclamation of truth is doing its separating work, we as faithful sentinels of God are to discern what our real position is. We are not to confederate with worldlings, lest we become imbued with their spirit, lest our spiritual discernment become confused and we view those who have the truth and bear the message of the Lord from the standpoint of the professed Christian churches. At the same time we are not to be like the Pharisees and hold ourselves aloof from them.” —*Last Day Events*, p. 84.

“As we near the time when principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places will be brought into warfare against the truth, when the deceiving power of Satan will be so great that if it were possible he will deceive the very elect, we must have our discernment sharpened by divine enlightenment, that we may know the spirit that is of God, that we may not be ignorant of Satan’s devices. Human effort must combine with divine power, that we may be able to accomplish the closing work for this time.” —*Selected Messages Book 2*, p. 15.

7. What do the wise virgins do as the bridal party travels past them? Matt. 25:10

“The sleepers, suddenly awaking, spring to their feet. They see the procession moving on, bright with torches and glad with music. They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.”

“The five with lighted lamps joined the throng and entered the house with the bridal train, and the door was shut.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 405, 406.

**8. What important message do we receive from the wise virgins?
Hos. 14:9**

“All who wait for the heavenly Bridegroom are represented in the parable as slumbering because their Lord delayed His coming; but the wise roused themselves at the message of His approach, and responded to the message, and their spiritual discernment was not all gone, and they sprang into line. As they took hold of the grace of Christ, their religious experience became vigorous and abundant, and their affections were set upon things above. They discerned where was the source of their supply, and appreciated the love that God had for them. They opened their hearts to receive the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts. Their lights were trimmed and burning, and sent forth steady rays into the moral darkness of the world. They glorified God, because they had the oil of grace in their hearts, and did the very work that their Master did before them—went forth to seek and to save those who were lost.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5*, p. 1099.

Five Foolish Virgins

*The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.
Proverbs 10:21*

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the religious profession of the foolish virgins.
- To identify the nature of their foolishness.
- To explore Inspiration to find where they expect to buy oil and to find the time when they returned to find the door shut.

NOT HYPOCRITES

1. What was meant in the parable by the term “virgins”? Lam. 2:13

“The two classes of watchers represent the two classes who profess to be waiting for their Lord. They are called virgins because they profess a pure faith.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 406.

2. While they profess a pure faith, does their foolishness represent a faulty or corrupt motive? Luke 13:25, 26

“The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to

those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 411.

"Our doctrines may be correct; we may hate false doctrine, and may not receive those who are not true to principle; we may labor with untiring energy; but even this is not sufficient." —*Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 370.

"Man must not only read the Word of God, supposing that a casual knowledge of this Word will bring about in him a reformation of character. This work only the One who is the way, the truth, and the life can accomplish. Firmly may certain doctrines of truth be held. Again and again they may be reiterated, till the holders come to think that they are indeed in possession of the great blessings which these doctrines represent. But the greatest, most powerful truths may be held, and yet kept in the outer court, exerting little influence to make the daily life wholesome and fragrant. The soul is not sanctified through the truth that is not practiced." —*Evangelism*, p. 290.

THE FOOLISHNESS

3. Then why were they called foolish virgins? 2 Tim. 3:5; Matt. 25:3

"The oil so much needed by those who are represented as foolish virgins, is not something to be put on the outside. They need to bring the truth into the sanctuary of the soul, that it may cleanse, refine, and sanctify. It is not theory that they need; it is the sacred teachings of the Bible, which are not uncertain, disconnected doctrines, but are living truths, that involve eternal interests that center in Christ. In Him is the complete system of divine truth. The salvation of the soul, through faith in Christ, is the ground and pillar of the truth." —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 16.

"Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will

not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 408.

4. Is there foolishness in professing Christianity while being out of touch with Christ? John 8:31, 32, 36; 14:6

“There will be some terrible falls by those who think they stand firm because they have the truth, but they have it not as it is in Jesus. A moment’s carelessness may plunge a soul into irretrievable ruin. One sin leads to the second, and the second prepares the way for the third, and so on. We must, as faithful messengers of God, plead with Him constantly to be kept by His power. If we swerve a single inch from duty, we are in danger of following on in a course of sin that will end in perdition. There is hope for every one of us, but only in one way, and that is by binding ourselves to Christ, and exerting every energy to attain to the perfection of His character.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5*, p. 540.

**5. How can we know whether we have the truth as it is in Jesus?
Matt. 7:20, 21**

“Are you in Christ? Not if you do not acknowledge yourselves erring, helpless, condemned sinners. Not if you are exalting and glorifying self. If there is any good in you, it is wholly attributable to the mercy of a compassionate Saviour. Your birth, your reputation, your wealth, your talents, your virtues, your piety, your philanthropy, or anything else in you or connected with you, will not form a bond of union between your soul and Christ. Your connection with the church, the manner in which your brethren regard you, will be of no avail unless you believe in Christ. It is not enough to believe *about* Him; you must believe *in* Him. You must rely wholly upon His saving grace.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5*, p. 48.

SEEKING TO BUY OIL

6. When told to go and buy oil, where did the foolish virgins go, thinking to procure it? Matt. 24:24; 2 Cor. 11:13; Jer. 2:13

“I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, "Father, give us Thy Spirit." Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan’s object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God’s children.” —*Early Writings*, p. 56.

7. When the foolish virgins think they have the oil and come too late after the close of probation, how does Inspiration describe their experience? Matt. 25:10-12; Luke 13:27, 28; Jer. 8:20

8. Can we identify the period of time when these foolish virgins will meet this experience, will it still be prior to the physical coming of Jesus in the clouds of heaven? Rev. 3:8, 9

“The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads were the words God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus’ new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush

violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us, who could wash one another's feet, and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet.

“Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. In solemn silence we all gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer, and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders, and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle, in His left a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through.”

—*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 1*, pp. 59, 60.

The Oil

...What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? Zechariah 4:12

OBJECTIVES

- To establish the meaning of the oil in the parable.
- To appreciate the ingredient of oil as a symbolic attribute of the Holy Spirit.
- To understand the need of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

THE SYMBOLIC OIL

1. What was oil used for anciently besides culinary purposes?

Ex. 27:20; 35:14

2. As oil was used to keep the flames of the candlestick of the sanctuary burning, does Inspiration reveal the meaning of this?

Zech. 4:1-6, 11-14

“From the two olive trees the golden oil was emptied through the golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick, and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So from the holy ones that stand in God’s

presence His Spirit is imparted to the human instrumentalities who are consecrated to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate to God's people that heavenly grace which alone can make His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zechariah 4:6." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 408.

3. How in the parable do we then understand the significance of the oil in the lamps and the vessels? Matt. 25:2-4; Ps. 18:28

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

“Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.” —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 408.

OIL OF THE SPIRIT

4. Is there a link in oil that can be connected to the Holy Spirit? Ex. 30:25-31; 29:7; Acts 10:38

“I have been instructed of the Lord that men who are bearing responsibilities in the work need the application of the heavenly anointing, which is the Spirit of God, to quicken and clear their discernment—for they certainly fail to discern sacred and eternal realities in their true significance.” —*1888 Materials*, p. 927.

5. Can we discern the benefit of oil as a parallel with the Holy Spirit? Ex. 30:25; Rev. 3:18 (last part); Eccl. 8:5 (last half)

“Oh, it makes every difference with those who study the Scriptures as to what and how they shall understand the Word, whether they eat it or not. The Word of God, if eaten, will give spiritual sinew and muscle. Those who eat and digest this Word will practice it. Their eyes, anointed with the heavenly eye-salve will see other lessons in the Holy Word than those seen by readers whose hearts are not cleansed, refined, and elevated. Under the working of the Holy Spirit the conscience will recognize a pure, high standard of righteousness that puts to shame the low, cheap ideas of the surface reader whose mind is corrupted with sin. They see that the doers of the Word alone are justified before God. Those who hear and fail to do are in no wise better, morally or spiritually, for hearing. Those who will deny self, and make any and every sacrifice for Christ’s sake will be able to teach because their precept and example harmonize.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 2*, p. 94.

6. Does Inspiration reveal another co-benefit of oil and the Holy Spirit? Luke 10:33, 34; 1 Cor. 12:8, 9; Jer. 8:22

“The sick may look to the great Healer as they do all that is possible to be done on their part, cooperating with Him who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He who would be healed must cease to transgress the law of God. He must cease to lead a life of sin. God cannot bless the one who continues to bring upon himself disease and suffering by neglecting and violating the laws of heaven. But the Holy Spirit comes with a healing power to those who cease to do evil and learn to do well.”

—*Loma Linda Messages*, p. 31.

THE BELIEVER'S NEED

7. How imperative is it for the believer to have the Holy Spirit?

John 14:26; 2 Cor. 3:15-18

“It is the truth as it is in Jesus that quickens the conscience and transforms the mind, for it is accompanied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit of God, we shall not be able to discern truth from error, and shall fall under the masterful temptations and deceptions that Satan will bring upon the world. We are near the close of the controversy between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness, and soon the delusions of the enemy will try our faith, of what sort it is. . . .”

“The work of the Holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul. Any person who looks to Christ in simple, childlike faith is made a partaker of the divine nature through the agency of the Holy Spirit. When led by the Spirit of God, Christians may know that they are made complete in Him who is the head of all things. As Christ was glorified on the day of Pentecost, so will He again be glorified in the closing work of the gospel, when He shall prepare a people to stand the final test in the closing conflict of the great controversy.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 365.

8. Do we see this utter need demonstrated in the parable of the ten virgins? Matt. 25:6-10

“The foolish virgins made no provision for their lamps; and when aroused from their slumbers, they found that their lights were going out. They now see the consequences of their carelessness, and plead with their companions for a supply of oil: "Give us of your oil," they say; "for our lamps are going out." But the waiting five, with their freshly trimmed lamps, have emptied their vessels. They have no oil to spare, and they answer: "Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you. But go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." But while they went to buy, the procession moved on, and left them behind. The bridal train entered the house, and the door was shut. When the foolish virgins reached the banqueting hall, they received an unexpected denial. They were left outside in the blackness of the night.” —*The Review and Herald*, Oct. 31, 1899.

The Lamp

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalm 119:105

OBJECTIVES

- To clarify the meaning of the lamp in the parable.
- To show that this lamp has the oil of the Holy Spirit in it causing it to burn as a light.
- To expand on the illuminating properties of the Bible.

THE SYMBOLIC LAMP

1. What do all the ten virgins in the parable possess? Matt. 25:1

“In the parable, all the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. All had lamps and vessels for oil. For a time there was seen no difference between them. So with the church that lives just before Christ’s second coming. All have a knowledge of the Scriptures. All have heard the message of Christ’s near approach, and confidently expect His appearing.”
—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 408.

2. Do we understand what Jesus meant by their lamps? Ps. 119:105

“God, has given us His Word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Its teachings have a vital bearing on our prosperity in all the relations of life. . . .

“The Bible is the great standard of right and wrong, clearly defining sin and holiness. Its living principles, running through our lives like threads of gold, are our only safeguard in trial and temptation. The Bible is a chart, showing us the waymarks of truth. Those who are acquainted with this chart will be enabled to tread with certainty in the path of duty, wherever they may be called to go.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 7.

HOLY-SPIRIT INSPIRED BIBLE

3. Does the Bible have the oil of the Holy Spirit in it? 2 Pet. 1:21

“All have a lamp, and that lamp, filled with the golden oil received from the heavenly witnesses standing before the throne of God, will shed the most precious, strong, pure, clear rays of light on the sinner’s pathway.” —*The Home Missionary*, Nov. 1, 1897.

4. If the lamp of the foolish virgins has gone out, does Inspiration give an explanation for this phenomenon? Matt. 25:7, 8

“The facts were plain. There was no dimness of the light. But the work of Christ was interpreted by different ones in accordance with the state of their minds.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 234.

5. What were the influences by which the lamps of the foolish virgins went out? 2 Pet. 2:1, 2; Matt. 24:48-50

“The Holy Ghost is the author of the Scriptures and of the Spirit of Prophecy. These are not to be twisted and turned to mean what man may

want them to mean, to carry out man's ideas and sentiments, to carry forward man's schemes at all hazards. "Many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of, and through covetousness shall with feigned words make merchandise of you" [2 Peter 2:2]. We must stand as vigilant soldiers, guarding against the entrance of one wrong principle." —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 2, p. 189.*

“The warnings of the word of God regarding the perils surrounding the Christian church belong to us today. As in the days of the apostles men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures, so today, by the pleasing sentiments of higher criticism, evolution, spiritualism, theosophy, and pantheism, the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths. To many the Bible is as a lamp without oil, because they have turned their minds into channels of speculative belief that bring misunderstanding and confusion. The work of higher criticism, in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God's word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives. By spiritualism, multitudes are taught to believe that desire is the highest law, that license is liberty, and that man is accountable only to himself.” —*The Acts of the Apostles, p. 474.*

LUMINOUS BIBLE

6. Can we find more evidence to show that the Bible has its own illumination? Prov. 6:23; Ps. 19:7, 8

“Satan is ever at work endeavouring to pervert what God has spoken, to blind the mind and darken the understanding, and thus lead men into sin. This is why the Lord is so explicit, making His requirements so very plain that none need err. God is constantly seeking to draw men close under His protection, that Satan may not practice his cruel, deceptive power upon them. He has condescended to speak to them with His own voice, to write with His own hand the living oracles. And these blessed words, all instinct

with life and luminous with truth, are committed to men as a perfect guide.

...

“Every chapter and every verse of the Bible is a communication from God to men.... If studied and obeyed, it would lead God’s people, as the Israelites were led, by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 350.

7. How should we relate ourselves to this luminosity? Prov. 22:17-21

“In our churches we should not act as though we were groping our way in the dark. Clear light has been given us. The Lord has spoken to every one in his word, and that word is luminous with light, and weighty with the precious ore of truth. In the Bible we have a perfect rule of conduct, and we are safe in humbly following it. With reverent hearts we should bow to God’s expressed will. We are not left in uncertainty; for in all the varied circumstances of life we may walk according to the instructions of God, which are based upon golden principles of truth, and revealed in the precepts of his law. In the Bible there are rules to meet every case. A complete system of faith has been revealed, and correct rules for practice in our daily life have been made known. Those who turn from the beaten path marked out in God’s word, because it suits their feelings better to do so than to walk according to the commandment, leave the light, and are enshrouded in darkness. Peace of mind, happiness, and heaven are sacrificed for the sake of maintaining human pride and indulging stubbornness of will.” —*The Review and Herald*, July 22, 1890.

The Vessel

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour... 2 Timothy 2:21

OBJECTIVES

- To understand what Jesus meant by the wise having oil in their vessels.
- To explore details of Inspiration by which we can appreciate our bodies as vessels for the Holy Spirit.
- To appreciate the connection between the oil in the vessel and that in the lamp.

OIL IN THE VESSEL

- 1. How did the five wise virgins differ from the five foolish virgins?
Matt. 25:3, 4; Dan. 12:3; 1 Cor. 2:13, 14**

“Let every youth consider the parable of the ten virgins. All had lamps, that is, an outward semblance of religion; but only five of them had the inward piety. Five of them were wanting in the oil of grace. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit, was not abiding in their hearts. Without the oil of grace, of what use was it to bear about a lamp of profession? However high may be the profession, however high may be the position held by a professor of religion, if the oil of grace is wanting, he has nothing with which to feed his lamp, and it cannot send forth clear, shining rays of light.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 118.

2. Having understood that oil represents the Holy Spirit, and that the lamp is the Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit; do we understand the meaning of the oil in the vessel? 2 Cor. 4:6, 7; 2 Tim. 2:21; John 14:17 (last part)

“Many receive the truth readily, but they fail to assimilate truth, and its influence is not abiding. They are like the foolish virgins, who had no oil in their vessels with their lamps. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, which is brought into the soul through faith in Jesus Christ. Those who earnestly search the Scriptures with much prayer, who rely upon God with firm faith, who obey His commandments, will be among those who are represented as wise virgins. The teachings of the Word of God are not yea and nay, but yea and amen.” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 16.

THE HUMAN VESSEL

3. With what clarity does Inspiration declare that the human body is a vessel for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? 1 Cor. 6:19, 20

“God requires the body to be rendered a living sacrifice to him, not a dead or a dying sacrifice. The offerings of the ancient Hebrews were to be without blemish, and will it be pleasing to God to accept a human offering that is filled with disease and corruption? He tells us that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost; and he requires us to take care of this temple, that it may be a fit habitation for his Spirit. The apostle Paul gives us this admonition: "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." [1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.] All should be very careful to preserve the body in the best condition of health, that they may render to God perfect service,

and do their duty in the family and in society.” —*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 52.

4. Where else in Scripture can we discern the human body to be a vessel? Ps. 31:12; Acts 9:15; 1 Thess. 4:3, 4; 1 Pet. 3:7

5. What is written to ensure that we may be the wise virgins to have the oil in our vessels? 1 Thess. 4:4; Rom. 12:1

“The Lord requires a living sacrifice of mind, soul, body, and strength. All that we have and are is to be given him, that we may answer the purpose of our creation.”

“True sanctification is not merely a theory, an emotion, or a form of words, but a living, active principle, entering into the every-day life. It requires that our habits of eating, drinking, and dressing be such as to secure the preservation of physical, mental, and moral health, that we may present to the Lord our bodies, not an offering corrupted by wrong habits, but a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."”

“It should ever be kept prominent that the great object to be attained through this channel is not only health, but perfection and the spirit of holiness, which cannot be attained with diseased bodies and minds. This object cannot be secured by working merely from the worldling’s standpoint.”

“A diseased body causes a disordered brain, and hinders the work of sanctifying grace upon the mind and heart.” —*Healthful Living*, p. 42.

THE LAMP AND THE VESSEL

6. How does the oil in the vessel and the oil in the lamp relate to one another? 1 Cor. 2:9-13

“The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer’s faith. It is that which Christ Himself has declared to be eternal life. But the possession of this knowledge was no ground for self-glorification. Through no wisdom or goodness of his own had it been revealed to Peter. Never can humanity, of itself, attain to a knowledge of the divine. "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" Job 11:8. Only the spirit of adoption can reveal to us the deep things of God, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him;" and the fact that Peter discerned the glory of Christ was an evidence that he had been "taught of God." Psalm 25:14; John 6:45. Ah, indeed, "blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee."” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 412.

7. Can we find other words of Inspiration which declare the answer to question six? John 16:12-14; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21

“Only under the direction of the Omniscient One shall we, in the study of His works, be enabled to think His thoughts after Him.” —*Education*, p. 134.

“So the followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world. Through the Holy Spirit, God’s word is a light as it becomes a transforming

power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom's home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 414.

8. Is it possible to understand the Bible correctly without the aid of the Holy Spirit? John 6:63, 65

“Paul writes to his Corinthian brethren: "Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye yet not carnal, and walk as men?" It is impossible for minds distracted by envy and strife to comprehend the deep spiritual truths of God's word. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." We cannot rightly understand or appreciate divine revelation without the aid of that Spirit by whom the word was given.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5*, p. 241.

“No one is able to explain the Scriptures without the aid of the Holy Spirit. But when you take up the Word of God with a humble, teachable heart, the angels of God will be by your side to impress you with evidences of the truth. When the Spirit of God rests upon you, there will be no feeling of envy or jealousy in examining another's position; there will be no spirit of accusation and criticism, such as Satan inspired in the hearts of the Jewish leaders against Christ. As Christ said to Nicodemus, so I say to you, "Ye must be born again." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:7, 3). You must have the divine mold before you can discern the sacred claims of the truth. Unless the teacher is a learner in the school of Christ, he is not fitted to teach others.” —*Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 411.

Give Us Of Your Oil

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. Matthew 25:8

OBJECTIVES

- To gain a wider appreciation of the meaning of the oil in the experience of believers.
- To recognise the personal application required in order to be a recipient of the Holy Spirit.
- To come to a clear understanding of why the wise virgins refused to impart some of their oil to the foolish.

OIL AND CHARACTER

- 1. Does Inspiration expand on the meaning of the oil the foolish virgins failed to take in their vessels? Matt. 25:3, 4; Prov. 22:17, 18**

“The foolish virgins do not represent those who are hypocritical. They had a regard for truth, they advocated the truth, they were intending to go forth to meet the bridegroom. They are attached to those who believe the truth, and go with them, having lamps, which represent a knowledge of the truth. When there was a revival in the church, their feelings were stirred; but they failed to have oil in their vessels, because they did not bring the principles of godliness into their daily life and character. They did not fall upon the rock Christ Jesus, and permit their old nature to be broken up. This class is represented also by the stony-ground hearers. Christ said: "Behold, a

sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside; and the fowls came and devoured them up; some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth." Jesus explains these stony-ground hearers, and says, "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for awhile; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." —*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 17, 1895.

2. If the oil represents the Holy Spirit, how then is the character also linked to the oil? Isa. 59:21; Jer. 31:33, 34

“The oil so much needed by those who are represented as foolish virgins, is not something to be put on the outside. They need to bring the truth into the sanctuary of the soul, that it may cleanse, refine, and sanctify. It is not theory that they need; it is the sacred teachings of the Bible, which are not uncertain, disconnected doctrines, but are living truths, that involve eternal interests that center in Christ. In Him is the complete system of divine truth. The salvation of the soul, through faith in Christ, is the ground and pillar of the truth.

“Those who exercise true faith in Christ make it manifest by holiness of character, by obedience to the law of God. They realize that the truth as it is in Jesus reaches heaven, and compasses eternity. They understand that the Christian’s character should represent the character of Christ, and be full of grace and truth. To them is imparted the oil of grace, which sustains a never-failing light. The Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer makes him complete in Christ.” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 16.

3. Is there a still wider application of the symbolism of oil? Jer. 33:14-16

“Now is the time to entreat that souls shall not only hear the word of God, but without delay secure oil in their vessels with their lamps. That oil is the righteousness of Christ.” —*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 233.

A PERSONAL WORK

4. As the oil of the Holy Spirit is needed within to produce the righteous character of Christ in the soul, is there a personal effort by the believer to be exerted in this matter? 2 Pet. 3:14; 1:10, 11; Phil. 2:12, 13

“Man is allotted a part in this great struggle for everlasting life; he must respond to the working of the Holy Spirit. It will require a struggle to break through the powers of darkness, but the Spirit that works in him can and will accomplish this. But man is no passive instrument to be saved in indolence. He is called upon to strain every muscle in the struggle for immortality, yet it is God that supplies the efficiency.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 91.

5. What is written of those who during the outpouring of the Holy Spirit are not doing this personal work? Acts 2:12, 13

“Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement, and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. . . .

“There must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have, will receive greater

light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 333.

AN IMPOSSIBILITY

6. As the virgins are aroused out of sleep at the midnight cry, what is revealed between the wise and the foolish? Matt. 25:5-8

“Character is revealed by a crisis. When the earnest voice proclaimed at midnight, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him," the sleeping virgins roused from their slumbers, and it was seen who had made preparation for the event. Both parties were taken unawares, but one was prepared for the emergency, and the other was found without preparation. Character is revealed by circumstances. Emergencies bring out the true metal of character. Some sudden and unlooked-for calamity, bereavement, or crisis, some unexpected sickness or anguish, something that brings the soul face to face with death, will bring out the true inwardness of the character. It will be made manifest whether or not there is any real faith in the promises of the word of God. It will be made manifest whether or not the soul is sustained by grace, whether there is oil in the vessel with the lamp.” —*The Review and Herald*, September 17, 1895.

7. Why can the wise virgins not give their oil to the foolish? Matt. 25:9

“There is a world lying in wickedness, in deception, and delusion, in the very shadow of death,—asleep, asleep. Who are feeling travail of soul to awaken them? What voice can reach them? My mind is carried to the future when the signal will be given, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out

to meet Him." But some will have delayed to obtain the oil for replenishing their lamps, and too late they will find that character, which is represented by the oil, is not transferable. That oil is the righteousness of Christ. It represents character, and character is not transferable. No man can secure it for another. Each must obtain for himself a character purified from every stain of sin. The Lord is coming in power and great glory. It will then be His work to make a complete separation between the righteous and the wicked. But the oil cannot then be transferred to the vessels of those who have it not. Then shall be fulfilled the words of Christ, "Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." The righteous and the wicked are to be associated together in the work of life. But the Lord reads the character, He discerns who are obedient children, who respect and love His commandments." —*The Bible Echo*, May 4, 1896.

MEDITATION

“Testing times come to all. How do we conduct ourselves under the test and proving of God? Do our lamps go out? or do we still keep them burning? Are we prepared for every emergency by our connection with Him who is full of grace and truth? The five wise virgins could not impart their character to the five foolish virgins. Character must be formed by us as individuals. It cannot be transferred to another, even if the possessor were willing to make the sacrifice. There is much we can do for each other while mercy still lingers. We can represent the character of Christ. We can give faithful warnings to the erring. We can reprove, rebuke, with all long-suffering and doctrine, bringing the doctrines of Holy Writ home to the heart. We can give heartfelt sympathy. We can pray with and for one another. By living a circumspect life, by maintaining a holy conversation, we may give an example of what a Christian should be; but no person can give to another his own mold of character. Let us duly consider the fact that we are to be saved, not as companies, but as individuals. We shall be judged according to the character we have formed. It is perilous to neglect to prepare the soul for eternity, and to put off making our peace with God until upon a dying bed. It is by the daily transactions of life, by the spirit we manifest, that we determine our eternal destiny. He who is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much. If we have made Christ our pattern, if we have walked and worked as he has given us an example in his own life, we shall be able to meet the solemn surprises that will come

upon us in our experience, and say from our heart, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

"It is in probationary time, the time in which we are living, that we should calmly contemplate the terms of salvation, and live according to the conditions laid down in the word of God. We should educate and train ourselves, hour by hour and day by day, by careful discipline, to perform every duty. We should become acquainted with God and with Jesus Christ whom he has sent. In every trial it is our privilege to draw upon him who has said, "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." The Lord says he is more willing to give us the Holy Spirit than parents are to give bread to their children. Then let us have the oil of grace in our vessels with our lamps, that we may not be found among those who are represented as foolish virgins, who were not prepared to go forth to meet the bridegroom." —*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 17, 1895.

An Inward Experience

...The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. Luke 17:20, 21

OBJECTIVES

- To expand on the experience of the wise virgins.
- To make it more obvious that they could not impart the oil of their experience to the foolish virgins.
- To appreciate the all-sufficiency of Christ within.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

1. What experience did the wise virgins have in contrast to the foolish? Dan. 12:10, 4; Hos. 14:9

“Through the imputed righteousness of Christ, the sinner may feel that he is pardoned, and may know that the law no more condemns him, because he is in harmony with all its precepts. It is his privilege to count himself innocent when he reads and thinks of the retribution that will fall upon the unbelieving and sinful. By faith he lays hold of the righteousness of Christ. . . . Knowing himself to be a sinner, a transgressor of the holy law of God, he looks to the perfect obedience of Christ, to His death upon Calvary for the sins of the world; and he has the assurance that he is justified by faith in the merit and sacrifice of Christ. He realizes that the law was obeyed in his behalf by the Son of God, and that the penalty of transgression cannot fall upon the believing sinner. The active obedience of Christ clothes the

believing sinner with the righteousness that meets the demands of the law.”
—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 240.

2. Is this experience an intellectual one, or does it go deeper than head knowledge? 1 John 5:10-13; Luke 17:20, 21

“Unless the mind is educated to dwell upon religious themes, it will be weak and feeble in this direction. But while dwelling upon worldly enterprises, it will be strong; for in this direction it has been cultivated, and has strengthened with exercise. The reason it is so difficult for men and women to live religious lives is because they do not exercise the mind unto godliness. It is trained to run in an opposite direction. Unless the mind is constantly exercised in obtaining spiritual knowledge and in seeking to understand the mystery of godliness, it is incapable of appreciating eternal things. . . . When the heart is divided, dwelling principally upon things of the world, and but little upon the things of God, there can be no special increase of spiritual strength.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 297.

**3. How does Inspiration articulate the reality of this experience?
Col. 1:25-28; Rom. 16:25, 26**

“It is impossible for finite minds to comprehend the work of redemption. Its mystery exceeds human knowledge; yet he who passes from death to life realizes that it is a divine reality. The beginning of redemption we may know here through a personal experience. Its results reach through the eternal ages.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

“The only way in which we can gain a more perfect apprehension of truth is by keeping the heart tender and subdued by the Spirit of Christ. The soul must be cleansed from vanity and pride, and vacated of all that has held it

in possession, and Christ must be enthroned within. Human science is too limited to comprehend the atonement. The plan of redemption is so far-reaching that philosophy cannot explain it. It will ever remain a mystery that the most profound reasoning cannot fathom. The science of salvation cannot be explained; but it can be known by experience. Only he who sees his own sinfulness can discern the preciousness of the Saviour.”

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 494.

TRANSFERAL OF EXPERIENCE

4. How only can the experience of Jesus be internalised to the believer? John 16:13, 14; 2 Cor. 4:6, 7

“Henceforth through the Spirit, Christ was to abide continually in the hearts of the children. Their union with Him was closer than when He was personally with them. The light, and love, and power of the indwelling Christ shone out through them, so that men, beholding, "marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13. All that Christ was to the disciples, He desires to be to His children today.”

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 62.

“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. When the Holy Spirit has achieved this, what is declared regarding our mind and thoughts? 1 Cor. 2:12, 15, 16; Phil. 2:5

“Only under the direction of the Omniscient One shall we, in the study of His works, be enabled to think His thoughts after Him.” —*Education*, p. 134.

6. As this transaction is done by the Holy Spirit in the personal experience of the believer, is the believer able to give this experience to anyone else? Ezek. 14:13-20

“This is the class that in time of peril are found crying, Peace and safety. They lull their hearts into security, and dream not of danger. When startled from their lethargy, they discern their destitution, and entreat others to supply their lack; but in spiritual things no man can make up another’s deficiency. The grace of God has been freely offered to every soul. The message of the gospel has been heralded, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. But character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit’s working. "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it [the land], as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." Ezekiel 14:20.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 411.

AN INDWELLING CHRIST

7. Why is an indwelling Christ so important? John 15:4, 5

“The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-

indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end.” —*Last Day Events*, p. 64.

8. How far-reaching are the benefits of an indwelling Christ? 2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:13

“The natural eye can never behold the comeliness and beauty of Christ. The inward illumination of the Holy Spirit, revealing to the soul its true hopeless, helpless condition without the mercy and pardon of the Sin-bearer—the all-sufficiency of Christ—can alone enable man to discern His infinite mercy, His immeasurable love, benevolence, and glory.”
—*The Upward Look*, p. 155.

“The righteous have ever obtained help from above. How often have the enemies of God united their strength and wisdom to destroy the character and influence of a few simple persons who trusted in God. But because the Lord was for them, none could prevail against them. . . . Let them be separated from their idols and from the world, and the world will not separate them from God. Christ is our present, all-sufficient Saviour. In Him all fullness dwells. It is the privilege of Christians to know indeed that Christ is in them of a truth. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." All things are possible to him that believeth; and whatsoever things we desire when we pray, if we believe that we receive them we shall have them. This faith will penetrate the darkest cloud and bring rays of light and hope to the drooping, desponding soul. It is the absence of this faith and trust which brings perplexity, distressing fears, and surmisings of evil. God will do great things for His people when they put their entire trust in Him.”
—*My Life Today*, p. 9.

Recognising the Bridal Party

And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed in a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers. Isaiah 30:20

OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate the perplexing task of Christians to identify the true messengers of God among so many ministries at the end.
- To show that the oil in the vessels of the five wise virgins harmonises with the oil amongst the bridal party.
- To describe the bewilderment among the five foolish virgins that prevented them from discerning the bridal party.

MULTIPLICITY OF CHURCHES

- 1. Having shown in lesson four that women represent churches, does prophecy reveal the multiple denominational churches that prevail at the last days to which the parable of this lesson points? Song 6:8; Matt. 24:4, 5, 11, 23**

“Satan hopes to involve the remnant people of God in the general ruin that is coming upon the earth. As the coming of Christ draws nigh, he will be more determined and decisive in his efforts to overthrow them. Men and women will arise professing to have some new light or some new revelation whose tendency is to unsettle faith in the old landmarks. Their doctrines will not bear the test of God’s word, yet souls will be deceived.

False reports will be circulated, and some will be taken in this snare. They will believe these rumors and in their turn will repeat them, and thus a link will be formed connecting them with the archdeceiver. This spirit will not always be manifested in an open defiance of the messages that God sends, but a settled unbelief is expressed in many ways. Every false statement that is made feeds and strengthens this unbelief, and through this means many souls will be balanced in the wrong direction.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5*, p. 295.

2. Does God identify an undefiled people which the wise virgins can recognise as the bridal party to which they can attach themselves? Song 6:9, 10; John 10:16

“There are many doctrines current in our world. There is many a religion current that numbers its thousands and tens of thousands, but there is but one that bears the superscription and the stamp of God. There is a religion of man and a religion of God. We must have our souls riveted to the eternal Rock. Everything in God’s world, both men and doctrines and nature itself, is fulfilling God’s sure word of prophecy and accomplishing His grand and closing work in this world’s history.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 12*, p. 324.

3. What is the comfort Jesus gives for His genuine believers? John 10:27, 28; 18:37 (last sentence)

“While lying in bed, unable to sleep because of the burden resting upon me, I was pleading with the Lord. I fell asleep, and in the night season I was taught of God. My guide said, "I have a work for you to do. You must speak the words given you by the Lord. After these words have been spoken, your duty here is done. You are not required to enter into details before individuals, whatever may be their position or work, if they do not

recognize the voice of God in the message He gives you to bear in His name. All your efforts to remove their doubts will be of no avail if they gather the clouds of darkness about their souls. If you enter into particulars, you weaken the message. It is not you speaking, but the Lord speaking through you. Those who want to know the will of God, who do not desire to follow their own will and judgment, will be easily entreated. They will be ready to discern the right way.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 339.

OIL OF DISCERNMENT

4. How do the wise virgins discern the true messengers who comprise the bridal party? Isa. 30:20, 21; Jer. 3:14, 15

“True believers are the light of the church and of the world. God has true messengers of healing in our world. They are those who are taught of God, who are imbued with His Spirit, ministers who experience the sanctification of the Spirit. Sons and daughters of God have a great work to do in the world. They are to be its light. They are to accept the Word of God as the man of their counsel, and impart it to others. They are to diffuse light. All who have received the engrafted Word will be faithful in giving that Word to others. They will speak the words of Christ. In conversation and in deportment they will give evidence of a daily conversion to the principles of truth. Such believers will be a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men, and God will be glorified in them.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 21*, p. 84.

“In the parable the wise virgins had oil in their vessels with their lamps. Their light burned with undimmed flame through the night of watching. It helped to swell the illumination for the bridegroom’s honor. Shining out in the darkness, it helped to illuminate the way to the home of the bridegroom, to the marriage feast.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 414.

5. Further to question four, do the wise virgins possess an internal quality which harmonises with the true messengers? John 17:20, 21; Rev. 18:4

“We are near the close of time. I have been shown that the retributive judgments of God are already in the land. The Lord has given us warning of the events about to take place. . . . Those who are drinking from the same fountain of blessing will draw nearer together. Truth dwelling in the hearts of believers will lead to blessed and happy assimilation. Thus will be answered the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one even as He is one with the Father. For this oneness every truly converted heart will be striving.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 343.

“God’s work is to be carried forward with power. We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We need to understand that God will add to the ranks of His people men of ability and influence who are to act their part in warning the world. Not all in the world are lawless and sinful. God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. There are God-fearing men and women in the fallen churches. If this were not so, we would not be given the message to bear: “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.” “Come out of her, My people.” [Revelation 18:2, 4.] Many of the honest in heart are gasping for a breath of life from heaven. They will recognize the gospel when it is brought to them in the beauty and simplicity with which it is presented in God’s word.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 346.

“Is Christ divided?—No. Christ abiding in the soul will not quarrel with Christ in another soul.” —*This Day With God*, p. 262.

OIL LACKING

6. Why could the foolish virgins not join the bridal party? 1 John 4:6

“Let not one ray of light from heaven be held in questioning and doubt. In great power the Lord has revealed to you His grace, His mercy, and His love; and He who charges the work of God to undue excitement, and calls

it fanaticism, is certainly standing on dangerous ground. If such do not retrieve their steps, their consciences will become less and less sensitive, and they will have less and less appreciation of the Spirit of God. It will become harder and harder for them to understand the message of God. Why?—Because they are sinning against the Holy Ghost; and as a result of their resistance, they place themselves where they cannot recognize the Spirit of God, but set themselves against every instrumentality that God might use to save them from ruin. "What sign shewest thou?" (John 2:18) said the Jews to Christ, when at the same time His life and character, His lessons and miracles, were continual signs of His holy mission and divinity." —*This Day With God*, p. 52.

7. Will God work in a way that is likely to bewilder the foolish virgins? Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:11, 12

“Unless those who can help in _____ are aroused to a sense of their duty, they will not recognize the work of God when the loud cry of the third angel shall be heard. When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up to the help of the Lord, they will want to bind about His work to meet their narrow ideas. Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.” —*Evangelism*, p. 118.

8. Do the five foolish virgins illustrate the need of the spirit of discernment? Isa. 29:9, 10, 13; Eccl. 8:5-7

“A marvelous work shall take place. Ministers, lawyers, doctors, who have permitted these falsehoods to overmaster their spirit of discernment, will be themselves deceivers, united with the deceived. A spiritual drunkenness will take possession of them. To the unfaithful stewards the Lord says, "Take your pleasure and walk in blindness as drunken men, for, after having many opportunities, and refusing to improve them, you will act at last as the drunkard acts, throwing away your hope of eternal life." Seeking deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and making lies their refuge, they will misinterpret the warnings and messages God has sent, placing on these warnings their false statements, to make God's Word of no effect.”
—*The Upward Look*, p. 317.

The Door Was Shut

*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.
Jeremiah 8:20*

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the meaning of the five foolish virgins being met with the words, "I know you not."
- To comprehend the timing of the event of the shut door.
- To observe the nature of the anguish experienced by the foolish virgins as they discover their position outside the door.

I KNOW YOU NOT

- 1. Where in the four gospels do we find the words of Jesus akin to "I know you not"? Matt. 25:11, 12; 7:22, 23; Luke 13:24-28**

- 2. When is it that these words apply to the experience of the professing people of God? Rev. 22:11, 12**

"Who will describe to you the lamentations that will arise when, at the boundary line that parts time and eternity, the righteous Judge will lift up His voice and declare, "It is too late." Long have the wide gates of heaven

stood open, and the heavenly messengers have invited and entreated: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." But at length the mandate goes forth: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

“The heavenly gate closes, the invitation of salvation ceases. In heaven it is said, "It is done." Such a time is not far distant. I plead with you to make sure work for eternity, to lay hold on the hope set before you in the gospel. Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for if you merely seek, you will not be able.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 79.

3. Why is it that Jesus does not know them although they are worshippers and professed believers in Jesus? Isa. 29:13; Ezek. 33:31, 32

“Among those to whom bitter disappointment will come at the day of final reckoning will be some who have been outwardly religious, and who apparently have lived Christian lives. But self is woven into all they do. They pride themselves on their morality, their influence, their ability to stand in a higher position than others, [and] their knowledge of the truth, for they think that these will win for them the commendation of Christ. "Lord," they plead, "we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets" (Luke 13:26). "Have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matthew 7:22).

“But Christ says, "I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

“There is no discussion; the time for that is past. The irrevocable sentence has been pronounced. They are shut out from heaven by their own unfitness for its companionship.” —*Selected Messages Book 1*, pp. 81, 82.

CLOSING OF PROBATION

4. In their quest to find oil for their lamps what is their experience by which they become aware that the door is shut? Amos 8:11-13

“Today Christ is looking with sadness upon those whose characters He must at last refuse to acknowledge. Inflated with self-sufficiency, they hope that it will be well with their souls. But at the last great day, the mirror of detection reveals to them the evil that their hearts have practiced, and shows them at the same time the impossibility of reform. Every effort was made to bring them to repentance. But they refused to humble their hearts. Now the bitter lamentation is heard, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved."” —*The Upward Look*, p. 301.

5. Are there other indications that reveal that time of probation has closed? Dan. 12:1; Joel 2:30, 31

“Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets, and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father. Before this time the awfully solemn declaration has gone forth, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him

be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.'" —*Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, p. 112.

AN AWAKENING ANGUISH

6. As the realisation of their hopeless state dawns on them, how does Inspiration describe the awakening of their condition? Jer. 8:20

“All earthly honor is perishable, all earthly treasures valueless when we are passing from this life. There will be nothing enduring but the heavenly treasure, and the favor of God will be more valuable than choice gold. There is time now to prepare for the future immortal life. It will not answer to neglect the preparation essential for our heavenly home. But many will be found wanting in that great day. The precious hours of probation will have passed by unimproved, and when it is too late the mournful cry will be heard, The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved. When the righteous Judge shall proclaim the destiny of all fixed—“He which is filthy, let him be filthy still and he that is holy, let him be holy still”—it will be a time when the most careless, the most trifling will come to their senses and discern that the truly wise were those who loved God and kept His commandments.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 19*, p. 192.

“At the final day, many will claim admission to Christ’s kingdom, saying, “We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets.” “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?” But the answer is, “I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me.” Luke 13:26; Matthew 7:22; Luke 13:27. In this life they have not entered into fellowship with Christ; therefore they know not the language of heaven, they are strangers to its joy. “What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:11.

“Saddest of all words that ever fell on mortal ear are those words of doom, “I know you not.” The fellowship of the Spirit, which you have slighted, could alone make you one with the joyous throng at the marriage feast. In that scene you cannot participate. Its light would fall on blinded eyes, its

melody upon deaf ears. Its love and joy could awake no chord of gladness in the world-benumbed heart. You are shut out from heaven by your own unfitness for its companionship.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 412, 413.

7. How excruciating will be their anguish? Matt. 8:12; 24:50, 51; Luke 13:26-28

“Many desired life, but made no effort to obtain it. They did not choose life, and now there was no atoning blood to cleanse the guilty, no compassionate Saviour to plead for them, and cry, "Spare, spare the sinner a little longer." All heaven had united with Jesus, as they heard the fearful words, "It is done. It is finished." The plan of salvation had been accomplished, but few had chosen to accept it. And as mercy’s sweet voice died away, fear and horror seized the wicked. With terrible distinctness they heard the words, "Too late! too late!"

“Those who had not prized God’s Word were hurrying to and fro, wandering from sea to sea, and from the north to the east, to seek the Word of the Lord. Said the angel, "They shall not find it. There is a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord. What would they not give for one word of approval from God! but no, they must hunger and thirst on. Day after day have they slighted salvation, prizing earthly riches and earthly pleasure higher than any heavenly treasure or inducement. They have rejected Jesus and despised His saints. The filthy must remain filthy forever.”” —*Early Writings*, p. 281.

8. Did Jesus feel their anguish, and make provision for them to be able to avoid it? Matt. 27:46

“Christ felt much as sinners will feel when the vials of God’s wrath shall be poured out upon them. Black despair, like the pall of death, will gather

about their guilty souls, and then they will realize to the fullest extent the sinfulness of sin. Salvation has been purchased for them by the suffering and death of the Son of God. It might be theirs, if they would accept of it willingly, gladly; but none are compelled to yield obedience to the law of God. If they refuse the heavenly benefit and choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin, they have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death. They will be forever separated from the presence of Jesus, whose sacrifice they had despised. They will have lost a life of happiness and sacrificed eternal glory for the pleasures of sin for a season.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 2, p. 210.*

“Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father’s acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father’s wrath upon Him as man’s substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.” —*The Desire of Ages, p. 753.*

MEDITATION

“The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that He endured—the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His Father’s face—speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life,—offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee. He, the Sin Bearer, endures the wrath of divine justice, and for thy sake becomes sin itself.” —*The Desire of Ages, p. 755.*