

THE CHURCH AS THE CITY OF REFUGE

Discussion Questions.

- ✓ Which church do you belong?
- ✓ Why are you a member in that church?
- ✓ What is church?
- ✓ What is the purpose of God for His church?
- ✓ What benefits do you gain from the church?
- ✓ How do you support the church of God?

Definition of God's church.

The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. The church of Christ is very precious in His sight. It is **the case which contains His jewels, the fold which encloses His flock**. {FLB 280.2} Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it." Ephesians 5:25. It is the purchase of His blood. Acts 20:28, Eph 5:22-27

What benefits have you found in the church of God?

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. ? Psalms 46:1-4,8,11-*In troublous times we need God's help which should be found in His city of refuge the church.* "... God loves His children with infinite love. To Him the dearest object on earth is His church. {FLB 281.5}

Number 35, Joshua 21.

"The cities of refuge were so distributed as to be within a half day's journey of every part of the land. The roads leading to them were **always to be kept in good repair**; all along the way **signposts** were to be erected bearing the word "*Refuge*" in **plain, bold characters**, that the fleeing one might not be delayed for a moment. Any person--Hebrew, stranger, or sojourner--might avail himself of this provision. But while the guiltless were not to be rashly slain, neither were the guilty to escape punishment. The case of the fugitive was to be fairly tried by the proper authorities, and only when found innocent of intentional murder was he to be protected in the city of refuge. The guilty were given up to the avenger. And those who were entitled to protection could receive it only on condition of remaining within the appointed refuge. **Should one wander away beyond the prescribed limits, and be found by the avenger of blood, his life would pay the penalty of his disregard of the Lord's provision.** At the death of the high priest, however, all who had sought shelter in the cities of refuge were at liberty to return to their possessions. {PP 515.3}

What comfort do you find in the church of God? The church is the city of refuge where sinners come to seek for God that they might be forgiven, they may encourage and exhort one another. Hebrews 10:25-29. Should any of us wander away beyond the prescribed limits-the church of God, and be found by the devil, then his life would pay the penalty of his disregard to God's provision for a city of refuge.

"The man of sin has instituted a false sabbath, and the professed Christian world has adopted this child of the papacy, refusing to obey God. Thus Satan leads men and women in a direction

opposite to the city of refuge; and by the multitudes who follow him, it is demonstrated that Adam and Eve are not the only ones who have accepted the words of the wily foe. {4BC 1172.1}

What is the purpose of God for His church?

It was organized for **service**, and its **mission is to carry the gospel to the world**. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, **are to show forth His glory**. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10. {AA 9.1}

Wonderful is the work which the Lord designs to accomplish through His church, **that His name may be glorified**. A picture of this work is given in Ezekiel's vision of the **river of healing**: "These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: . . . and by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." Ezekiel 47:8-12. {AA 13.1}

As a member in the church of God how have you shown forth the glory of Him who has called you into His marvelous light? Are you accomplishing God's intended purpose for His church? In this family what plans do you have to help the absent members to constantly come for the meetings, that they may find Jesus just as you?

What does Christ require from His Children-members of His church?

Christ loves His church. He will **give all needed help** to those who call upon **Him for strength** for the development of **Christlike character**. But His love is not weakness. He will not serve with their sins or give them **prosperity while they continue to follow a wrong course of action**. Only by faithful repentance will their sins be forgiven; for God will **not cover evil with the robe of His righteousness**. He will honor faithful service. He will abundantly bless those who reveal to their fellowmen His justice, mercy, and love. Let those who are engaged in His service walk before Him in **true humility, following faithfully in His footsteps, cherishing the holy principles which will live through the eternal ages**. Let them in word and action show that they obey the laws which are obeyed in heaven. {SD 13.3}

"I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18. If you call God your Father, you acknowledge yourselves His children, to be guided by His wisdom, and to be obedient in all things, knowing that His love is changeless. You will accept His plan for your life. **As children of God, you will hold His honor, His character, His family, His work, as the objects of your highest interest. It**

will be your joy to recognize and honor your relation to your Father, and to every member of His family. {SD 14.4}

God desires that all become active in His church. Everyone who connects himself with **the church makes in that act a solemn vow to work for the interest of the church, and to hold that interest above every worldly consideration.** It is his work to preserve a living connection with God, to engage with heart and soul in the great scheme of redemption, and to show, in his life and character, the excellency of God's commandments in contrast with the customs and precepts of the world. Every soul that has made a profession **of Christ has pledged himself to be all that it is possible for him to be as a spiritual worker, to be active, zealous, and efficient in his Master's service.** Christ expects every man to do his duty; let this be the watchword throughout the ranks of His followers. . . . {CS 43.1}

Those who are **most actively employed in doing with interested fidelity their work to win souls to Jesus Christ,** are **the best developed in spirituality and devotion.** Their very **active working formed the means of their spirituality.** {Ev 356.3} Psalms 67 the prayer of psalmist for the prosperity of the church of God.

Do you support your church in tithing and offerings? Have you ever participated in the church activities; missions, social Sundays, vespers, bible studies, singing in church choir or singing groups e.t.c? what makes you not to participate?

God is calling all to be actively involved in His church, not lazing, not cold but zealous to labour for Him who died for us, for that is the whole duty of a man. Ecclesiastes 12:13. For more information study chapter 8 of steps to Christ; Growing in Christ.

WELCOME FOR THIS COMING TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT THE TRUE CHURCH OF GOD

STUDY TWO

THE CHURCH OF GOD AS A SHIP

Discussion questions

- ✓ Have you ever travelled by ship or boat especially in a troubled sea, lake or river? What was the experience?
- ✓ Have you ever thought of joining another church? What reasons did you have?
- ✓ Have you ever thought of quitting your church never again to worship? What reasons made you think of such a decision?
- ✓ Do you think the church of God will fall at one time in the near future?

Tares and wheat

It is our expectation that we find in church pure and holy Christians having the exact character of Christ. But what can be seen in today's churches? Is Christ seen in us or are there some deformities still among church members?

Read Matthew 13:24-30, 36-42.

Has God no living church? He has a church, but it is the church militant, not the church triumphant. **We are sorry that there are defective members**, that there are **tares amid the wheat**. Some people seem to think that upon entering the church they will have their expectations fulfilled, and **meet only with those who are pure and perfect**. They are zealous in their faith, and when they see faults in church members, they say, "*We left the world in order to have no association with evil characters, but the evil is here also;*" and they ask, as did the servants in the parable, "From whence then hath it tares?" But we need not be thus disappointed, for the Lord has not warranted us in coming to the conclusion that the **church is perfect; and all our zeal will not be successful in making the church militant as pure as the church triumphant.**--TM 47 (1893). {LDE 61.3}

What hope do we then have as a church?

. . . Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counseled, **is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard.**--TM 45, 49 (1893). {LDE 52.2}

The work is soon to close. The members of the church militant who have proved faithful will become the church triumphant.--Ev 707 (1892). {LDE 62.1}

What do we do when we see our church this much polluted? Do we vacate? Do we look for other congregations?

Acts 27:31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, **except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.**

Though dark are the waters and rough is the wave, if Jesus permits, the wild surges we'll brave. Outside has never been a safe place for any one. John says in Revelation 22:15 For without [are] **dogs**, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. Outside what? The city of God today symbolized by His church.

I tell you, my brethren, the Lord has an organized body through whom He will work. . . . **When anyone is drawing apart from the organized body of God's commandment-keeping people**, when he **begins to weigh the church in his human scales and begins to pronounce judgment against them**, then you may know that God is not leading him. He is on the wrong track.--3SM 17, 18 (1893). {LDE 51.4}

The Lord has not given you a message to call the **Seventh-day Adventists Babylon**, and to call the people of God to come out of her. All the reasons you may present cannot have weight with me on this subject, because the Lord has given me decided light that is opposed to such a message. . . . {LDE 51.2}

Jesus is in the Ship

Matthew 8:23- 27 And when **he was entered into a ship**, his disciples followed him...

The Lord is in the ship, what fears do we have? Can we trust the one who loved the church that He gave Himself for it to take the ship through to the harbour?

Sister white's experience while in a ship

When I voyaged from Portland, Maine, to Boston, many years ago, a storm came upon us, and the great waves dashed us to and fro. The chandeliers fell, and the trunks were rolled from side to side, like balls. The passengers were frightened, and many were screaming, waiting in expectation of death.

After a while the pilot came on board. The captain stood near the pilot as he took the wheel, and expressed fear about the course in which the ship was directed. "Will you take the wheel?" asked the pilot. The captain was not ready to do that, for he knew that he lacked experience. Then some of the passengers grew uneasy, and said they feared the pilot would dash them upon the rocks. "Will you take the wheel?" asked the pilot; but they knew that they could not manage the wheel. When you think that the work is in danger, pray, "Lord stand at the wheel. Carry us through the perplexity. Bring us safely into port." Have we not reason to believe that the Lord will bring us through triumphantly? . . . {FLB 282}

God has a church upon the earth, who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people. There is **no need to doubt, to be fearful that the work will not succeed**. God is at the **head of the work**, and He will set everything in order. If matters need adjusting at the head of the work, **God will attend to that, and work to right every wrong**. Let us have faith that **God is going to carry the noble ship which bears the people of God safely into port**. {FLB 282}

When a church proves unfaithful to the word of the Lord, whatever their position may be, however high and sacred their calling, the Lord can no longer work with them. Others are then chosen to bear important responsibilities. But, if these in turn do not purify their lives from every wrong action, if they do not establish pure and holy principles in all their borders, then the Lord will grievously afflict and humble them and, unless they repent, will remove them from their place and make them a reproach.--14MR 102 (1903). {LDE 59.2}

What do you understand about this church (Seventh-day Adventist)?

Seventh-day Adventists have been **chosen by God as a peculiar people, separate from the world**. By the **great cleaver of truth** He has cut them out from the quarry of the world and brought them into connection with Himself. He has made them His representatives and has called them to be ambassadors for Him in the last work of salvation. **The greatest wealth of truth ever entrusted to mortals, the most solemn and fearful warnings ever sent by God to man, have been committed to them to be given to the world.**--7T 138 (1902). {LDE 45.2}

Do we believe this?

IN ORDER TO GET A THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH OF GOD LETS NOT MISS THE NEXT TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY. WE SHALL LOOK AT THE BLUE PRINT OF THE LAST DAY CHURCH OF GOD.

STUDY THREE

THE LIFESTYLE IN THE CHURCH OF GOD

Discussion questions

- ✓ What do you love doing when you enter the place of worship?
- ✓ What do you hate doing in church?
- ✓ How would you behave in the presence of your father? Would you facebook, chat etc when conversing?
- ✓ How should we behave in the presence of God who is inside the City of refuge, inside the ship, inside the church?
- ✓ How often do you converse with your heavenly father?

Jeremiah 8:14 Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let **us enter into the defenced cities**, and let **us be silent there:....Zechariah 2:13, Psalms 99:1, Psalms 79:1**

Habbakuk 2:20 But the LORD [is] in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

Ecclesiastes 5:1 Keep thy foot when **thou goest to the house of God**, and be **more ready to hear**, than to give **the sacrifice of fools**: for they consider not that **they do evil**.

- **Keep thy foot.** In Hebrew Bibles, in the LXX, and in the Vulgate, this is v. 17 of ch. 4. Keep thy foot is equivalent to the colloquial expression **Watch your step**, and is used here in a figurative sense, in harmony with the thought of Gen. 17:1 and Ps. 119:101.
- **House of God.** The ancient tabernacle was called the **house of Jehovah** (1 Sam. 1:7; 2 Sam.12:20). The same title was later used of the Temple in Jerusalem (see 1 Kings 3:1).
- **Sacrifice of fools.** The fools here referred to do evil , when they enter the house of God by *not keeping their foot* and not being ready to hear. **They are unaware of Him in whose presence they stand** (v. 2), **their thoughts are upon earthly things**, and as a result their words are often rash, hasty, and many. Those who attend church, **so unaware of the presence of God that they think and converse on common topics, are here classed by the wise man as fools. Their worship is mere form.**
- **They do evil.** Ignorant of God's spiritual requirements, they fail to worship Him sincerely and intelligently (see John 4:24). They sin in their self-imposed

ignorance, and as a result their worship and their gifts thoughtlessly offered are unacceptable to God.

God should be addressed with reverent awe (see 1 Kings 8:43). God cannot be approached as we would approach a man. Because of the irreverence in (1) **attitude**, (2) **dress**, **and** (3) **deportment**, **and** (4) **lack of a worshipful frame of mind**, God has often turned His face away from those assembled for His worship. {5T 498.3}

Unless correct ideas of true worship and true reverence are impressed upon the people, there will be a growing tendency to place the sacred and eternal on **a level with common things, and those professing the truth will be an offense to God and a disgrace to religion**. They can never, with their uncultivated ideas, appreciate a pure and holy heaven, and be prepared to join with the worshipers in the heavenly courts above, where all is purity and perfection, where every being has perfect reverence for God and His holiness. {5T 500.1}

From the sacredness which was attached to the earthly sanctuary, Christians may learn how they should regard the place where the **Lord meets with His people**. There has been a great change, not for the better, **BUT FOR THE WORSE**, in the *habits and customs of the people in reference to religious worship...* {5T 491.2}

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

What time and where do you go for worship.

Some have decided to come to congregate any time they feel like. Had God given instructions to ancient Israel on the time and manner of worship? Does He require less of us today?

Hebrews 10:25 Not **forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]**; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. God gave specific instructions to Israel concerning what and when to do. Read the following verses: Ex 12:18, 29:39-40, Lev 23:32, Acts 3:1.

The house is the sanctuary for the family, and the closet or the grove the most retired place for individual worship; but the **church is the sanctuary for the congregation**. There should be rules in regard to **the time, the place, and the manner of worshiping**. Nothing that is sacred, nothing that pertains to the worship of God, should be treated with carelessness or indifference... {5T 491.3}

When the benediction is pronounced, all should **still be quiet, as if fearful of losing the peace of Christ**. Let all pass out without jostling or loud talking, feeling that they are in the presence of God, that His eye is resting upon them, and that they **must act as in His visible presence**....It should not be made a place to meet old friends and visit and introduce common thoughts and **worldly business transactions**. These should be **left outside the church**. God and angels have been dishonored by the careless, noisy laughing and shuffling of feet heard in some places. {5T 493.2}

When the word is spoken, you should remember, brethren, that you are listening to the voice of God through His delegated servant. Listen attentively. **Sleep not for one instant**, because by this slumber you may lose the very words that you need most--the very words which, if heeded, would save your feet from straying into wrong paths....Sometimes a **little child may so attract**

the attention of the hearers that the precious seed does not fall into good ground and bring forth fruit. **Sometimes young men and women have so little reverence** for the house and worship of God that they keep up a **continual communication with each other during the sermon**. Could these see the angels of God looking upon them and marking their doings, they would be filled with shame, with abhorrence of themselves. **GOD WANTS ATTENTIVE HEARERS**. It was while **men slept that Satan sowed his tares**. {5T 493.1}

If some have to wait a few minutes before the meeting begins, let them maintain *a true spirit of devotion by silent meditation, keeping the heart uplifted to God in prayer that the service may be of special benefit to their own hearts and lead to the conviction and conversion of other souls*. They should remember that heavenly messengers are in the house. We all lose much sweet communion with God by our restlessness, by not encouraging moments of reflection and prayer.

DRESS

1 Peter 3:3-4

I am often pained as **I enter the house where God is worshiped**, to see the **untidy dress of both men and women**. If the heart and character were indicated by the outward apparel, then certainly nothing could be heavenly about them...Some will enter the place of worship with their **hats on, in soiled, dirty clothes**. Such do not realize that they are to meet with God and holy angels. There should be a radical change in this matter all through our churches.

All should be taught to be **neat, clean, and orderly in their dress**, but not to indulge in that external **adorning which is wholly inappropriate for the sanctuary**. There should be no display of the apparel; for this encourages irreverence. The attention of the people is often called to this or that fine article of dress, and thus thoughts are intruded that should have no place in the hearts of the worshipers. **God is to be the subject of thought**, the object of worship; **and anything that attracts the mind from the solemn, sacred service is an offense to Him**. The parading of bows and ribbons, ruffles and feathers, and gold and silver ornaments is a species of idolatry and is wholly inappropriate for the sacred service of God, where the eye of every worshiper should be single to His glory. {5T 499.1}

DEPORTMENT

When the worshipers **enter the place of meeting**, they should do so with **decorum**, passing **quietly to their seats**...**Common talking, whispering, and laughing** should not be permitted in the house of worship, either before or after the service. Ardent, active piety should characterize the worshipers. {5T 492.1}

When the minister enters, it should be with **dignified, solemn mien**. He should bow down in **silent prayer as soon as he steps into the pulpit**, and earnestly ask help of God...Every one of the congregation, also, **who fears God should with bowed head unite in silent prayer** with him that God may grace the meeting with His presence and give power to His truth proclaimed from human lips. The prayers of faithful worshipers will be heard, and the ministry of the word will prove effectual. The **lifeless attitude of the worshipers in the house of God is one great reason why the ministry is not more productive of good**.... All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the **visible presence of the Master of assemblies**. {5T 492.3}

WORSHIPPING FRAME OF MIND

Many heads of families make the **service a subject of criticism at home**, approving a few things and **condemning others**. Thus the message of God to men is **criticized and questioned**, and made a subject of levity. What impressions are thus made upon the young by these careless, irreverent remarks the books of heaven alone will reveal.... **God is to be the subject of thought**, the object of worship; **and anything that attracts the mind from the solemn, sacred service is an offense to Him**.

To the humble, believing soul, **the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven**. The song of praise, the prayer, the words spoken by Christ's representatives, are God's appointed agencies to prepare a people for the church above, for that loftier worship into which there can enter nothing that defileth. {5T 491.1}

Brethren, will you not devote a little thought to this subject and notice how you conduct yourselves in the house of God and what efforts you are making by precept and example to cultivate reverence in your children? For more information, visit 5T p.491-500 CHAPTER 55.

PART TWO OF THE DEVOTIONAL LIFESTYLE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD WILL BE DONE THIS COMING TUESDAY WELCOME PLEASE MISS NOT.

STUDY FOUR

THE LIFESTYLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

Discussion questions

- ✓ *Let each person give their favorite verses which they have committed into memory*
- ✓ *What would you do if someone told you that today is your last day? What activities would you engage in?*
- ✓ *How much time do you spend in your daily activities? Compare with that spend in serving others or doing your devotion.*
- ✓ *How do you feel when the Sabbath is about to begin?*

Read 2 Kings 20:1-10 Isaiah 38, Matthew 6:11.

*What do you understand by the statement in 2 Kings 20:1 “**set thine house in order**”? How is your house-your heart? Are you in a position to die in Christ or see Jesus? What have you done in preparing for His second coming?*

Devotional moments

Each morning **consecrate yourselves** and your **children to God for that day**. Make no calculation for **months or years; these are not yours**. **One brief day is given you**. As if it were your last on earth, work during its hours for the Master. Lay all your plans before God, to be carried out or given up, as His providence shall indicate. --7T 44 (1902).

Evening and morning join with your **children in God's worship, reading His Word and singing His praise**. Teach them to repeat God's law.--Ev 499 (1904). {LDE 83.4}

Now and onward till the close of time the people of God **should be more earnest, more wide-awake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader.** They should set aside **days for fasting and prayer.** Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food.--CD 188, 189 (1904). {LDE 82.2}

Do you normally have your morning and evening devotion? What do you normally do?

Build a **wall of scriptures** around you, and you will see that the world cannot break it down. Commit the Scriptures to memory, and then throw right **back upon Satan when he comes with his temptations, "It is written."** This is the way that our Lord met the temptations of Satan, and resisted them.--RH April 10, 1888....

None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict {GC 593.2}.

Sacrificing as individuals for the Master. 2 Peter 3:12

Do we long to see Jesus come back? What part are you playing as a member of this church in the 'hastening' of the kingdom?

Long has God waited for the **spirit of service to take possession of the whole church** so that **EVERYONE SHALL BE WORKING FOR HIM ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITY.** When the **members of the church of God do their appointed work in the needy fields at home and abroad, in fulfillment of the gospel commission,** the whole world will soon be warned, and the Lord Jesus will return to this earth with power and great glory.-- {AA 111.1}

God has given us diverse abilities which we can use in proclaiming the three angels message. Have you realized your ability in serving the master? Some can preach, sing, teach, heal, going for door to door praying for and with individuals, welcoming members in the church, serving as deacons and deaconess in the church, leaders in the church....etc. Find something to do for Jesus dear friend.

Christ commits to His followers an **individual work**--a work that cannot be done by **proxy.** Ministry to the sick and the poor, the giving of the gospel to the lost, is not to be left to **committees or organized charities.** **Individual responsibility, individual effort, personal sacrifice, is the requirement of the gospel.**— {MH 147.4}

Why do we love to be seen as 'back-benchers', as nominal members of the church who are there just to be seen not speaking not actively working for the master? Can anyone receive Christ in their hearts and remain indolent?

..So those who are the partakers of the grace of Christ will be **ready to make any sacrifice, that others for whom He died may share the heavenly gift.** They will do **all they can** to make the world better for their stay in it. This spirit is the sure outgrowth of a soul **truly converted.** No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart...{SC 78.2}

What happens if we don't work for Jesus?

The only way to **grow in grace is to be disinterestedly doing the very work which Christ has enjoined upon us--to engage,** to the **EXTENT OF OUR ABILITY,** in **helping and blessing**

those who need the help we can give them. Strength comes by exercise; activity is the very condition of life. Those who endeavor to **maintain Christian life by passively** accepting the blessings that come through the means of grace, and **doing nothing for Christ**, are simply trying to **live by eating without working**. And in the spiritual as in the natural world, this always results in **degeneration and decay**. A **MAN WHO WOULD REFUSE** to exercise his limbs would soon lose all power to use them. Thus the **Christian who will not exercise his God-given powers not only fails to grow up into Christ, but he loses the strength that he already had.** {SC 80.3}

Does this then, call us to a life of hermits?

Christ says, "*Occupy till I come*" [Luke 19:13]. It may be but a few years until our life's history shall close, but we **must occupy till then**.--RH April 21, 1896.

What do we occupy?

Christ declared that when He comes some of His waiting people will be engaged in **business transactions**. Some will be sowing in the field, others reaping and gathering in the harvest, and others grinding at the mill. It is not God's will that His elect shall abandon **life's duties and responsibilities and give themselves up to idle contemplation, living in a religious dream**.--Ms 18a, 1901. {LDE 76.4}

The apostle says, "Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." 1 Corinthians 7:24. The **businessman may conduct his business** in a way that will glorify his Master because of his fidelity. If he is a true follower of Christ he will carry his religion into everything that is done and reveal to men the spirit of Christ. **The mechanic may be a diligent** and faithful representative of Him who toiled in the lowly walks of life among the hills of Galilee. Everyone who names the name of Christ should so work that others, by seeing his good works, may be led to glorify their Creator and Redeemer. {SC 82.1}

Guard Association With the World

Those who are **watching and waiting for the appearing of Christ** in the clouds of heaven will **not be mingling with the world in pleasure societies and gatherings** merely for their own amusement. To **bind ourselves up by contracts or in partnerships or business associations** with those not of our faith is **not in the order of God**. We should unite with other people just as far as we can and **not sacrifice principle**. This does not mean that we should join their lodges and societies, but that we should let them know that we are most heartily in sympathy with the temperance question. {LDE 85.3}

Sabbath observance

Our heavenly Father desires **through the observance of the Sabbath to preserve among men a knowledge of Himself**. He desires that the Sabbath shall direct our minds to Him as the true and living God, and that through knowing Him we may have life and peace. **All through the week we are to have the Sabbath in mind and be making preparation to keep it according to the commandment**. We are not merely to observe the Sabbath as a legal matter. We are to understand its spiritual bearing upon all the transactions of life. . . . {LDE 77.5}

When the Sabbath is thus remembered, the temporal will not be **allowed to encroach upon the spiritual**. No duty pertaining to the **six working days will be left for the Sabbath**. The

necessities of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the needy must be supplied. He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. God's holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent. God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour's pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day. {LDE 78.2}

WELCOME FOR THE COMING TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY WHERE WE SHALL LEARN MORE CONCERNING THE LIFESTYLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE LAST DAY CHURCH OF GOD.

STUDY FIVE

WORSHIPPING GOD

Discussion questions

- ✓ Why were we created?
- ✓ How has the devil counterfeited God's worship in the bible?

Revelation 4:11 *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: **for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.***

Ecclesiastes 12:13 *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man.***

1 Samuel 15:22 *And Samuel said, Hath the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken than the fat of rams.*

God created man with an objective. Solomon in his book thinks of the **recognition of God and obedience to His wise requirements** as the supreme objective of life. It is man's duty, his destiny, **to obey God**, and in so doing he will find supreme happiness. Whatever his lot may be, whether cast in adversity or prosperity, it remains his **duty to yield loving obedience to his Maker.**

Two classes of worshippers

Today there exists two classes of people just as exemplified by the two sons of Adam. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Hebrews 11:4.

Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, **differed widely in character.** Abel had a spirit of loyalty to God; he saw justice and mercy in the Creator's dealings with the fallen race, and gratefully accepted the hope of redemption. But Cain cherished feelings of rebellion, and murmured against God because of the curse pronounced upon the earth and upon the human race for Adam's sin. He permitted his mind to run in the same channel that led to Satan's fall--**indulging the desire for self-exaltation and questioning the divine justice and authority.** {PP 71.1}

The two brothers **erected their altars alike**, and **each brought an offering**. Abel presented a sacrifice from the flock, in accordance with the Lord's directions. "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering." Fire flashed from heaven and consumed the sacrifice. But Cain, disregarding the Lord's direct and explicit command, presented only an offering of fruit. There was no token from heaven to show that it was accepted. Abel pleaded with his brother to approach God in the divinely prescribed way, but his entreaties only made Cain the more determined to follow his own will. As the eldest, he felt above being admonished by his brother, and despised his counsel. {PP 71.3}

It is not a matter of erecting an altar nor bringing sacrifices but it's all about **being loyal-obeying God's instructions**. Taking God at His word. This requires Faith no wonder Paul says "by faith Abel..."

So far as **birth and religious instruction** were concerned, these brothers were equal. Both were sinners, and both **acknowledged the claims of God to reverence and worship**. To outward appearance their religion was the same up to a certain point, but beyond this the **difference between the two was great**. {PP 72.2}

In the Christian realm we can see our brother Cain-one who wishes to revere and worship God though not obeying His standards while on the other side of the domain we can see Abel- a sect that beyond acknowledging the claims of God in the subject of worship, they desire to obey Him wholly. Where do you belong dear reader?

The great controversy is set around the theme of worship. The devil has counterfeited God's worship such that it is almost impossible to realize that one is not worshipping the True God. The Sabbath day is clearly shown in the bible to be on Saturday the seventh day of the week. However, many though being aware of this fact worship God any way, but disregard His directions on how to worship Him. They have erected an altar-church, they bring their offerings-go to worship, but have disregarded the manner in which to worship Him. We have a great work of correcting them just as Abel did though younger than Cain. False Sabbath will have its effect as **receiving the mark of the beast** while true Sabbath makes one **receive the seal of the living God**.

THE SABBATH WORSHIP

This is not a choice but a duty to the congregation in the Antitypical day of atonement.

Numbers 29:7-8 *And ye shall have on the tenth [day] of this seventh month (THE DAY OF ATONEMENT) an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work [therein]: But ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD [for] a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, [and] seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish:*

The Lord has given us the seventh day Sabbath that we may congregate together to exhort one another but especially during this antitypical day of atonement **Hebrews 10:25** *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*

The test of loyalty to God has been placed on man just as it has been in every generation of Cain and Abel it is said “These brothers were tested, as Adam had been tested before them, to prove whether they would believe and obey the word of God...PP 71.2”. Today God is testing us with a similar test to that in the past generations-OBEDIENCE TO HIS LAWS. More especially the test has always been on the worship part.

Read chapter 16 of Exodus from verse 1-26

Exodus 16:4 “Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, **that I may prove them**, whether they will walk in my law, or no.”

God’s test on worship is the final test to the whole world. He says concerning the Sabbath that He will prove them in verse 4 of the 16th chapter of Exodus.

Sabbath Is the Issue That Divides the World

The Sabbath will be **the great test of loyalty**, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between **those who serve God and those who serve Him not**. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God’s law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of **submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast**, the other choosing the token of **allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God**. {GC 605.2}

SUMMARY POINT

Have you been serious in worshipping God? There is no sitting at the fence brethren, its either you receive the seal of God or the mark of the beast for “There can be only two classes. Each party is distinctly stamped, either with the **seal of the living God**, or with the **mark of the beast** or **his image**.--RH Jan. 30, 1900. {LDE 215.1} In the great conflict between faith and unbelief the whole Christian world will be involved. **All will take sides**. Some apparently may not engage in the conflict on either side. They may **not appear to take sides against the truth**, but they will **not come out boldly for Christ through fear of losing property or suffering reproach**. All such are numbered with the enemies of Christ.--RH Feb. 7, 1893. {LDE 215.2}”

STUDY SIX

LAST DAY EVENTS

Discussion questions

- ✓ What events do you know will usher in the second advent?
- ✓ Have you witnessed their occurrence?

- ✓ Do you believe that Christ is about to come, why?
- ✓ How have you prepared for His second coming?

WHY ARE WE NOT TO KNOW THE DEFINITE TIME?

Matthew 24:36 *“But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”* We are not to know the definite time either for the **outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ**. . . . Why has not God given us this knowledge? --Because we would not make a right use of it if He did. A condition of things would result from this knowledge among our people that would greatly retard the work of God in preparing a people to stand in the great day that is to come. We are not to live upon time excitement. . . . {LDE 33.1}

Matthew 24:32-33 *“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer [is] nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, [even] at the doors.”*

Are we never to know that period, whilst He Himself exhorteth us not only **to read Daniel** the prophet, but **to understand** it? and in that very Daniel, where it is said that the words were shut up to the time of the end (which was the case in his time), and that **'many shall run to and fro'** (a Hebrew expression for **observing and thinking upon the time**), 'and knowledge' (regarding that time) 'shall be increased.' Daniel 12:4. Besides this, our Lord does not intend to say by this, that the approach of the time shall not be known, but that the exact **'day and hour knoweth no man.'** Enough, **He does say, shall be known by the signs of the times, to induce us to prepare for His coming, as Noah prepared the ark.**--Wolff, Researches and Missionary Labors, pages 404, 405. {GC 359.2}

WHY DOES GOD TELL US THE HARBINGERS PRECEEDING HIS SECOND COMING?

In the typical service the congregation in the court listened for **the tinkling of the golden bells on the robes of the high priest, and in that way followed him in his work.** Our High Priest has given signs in the heavens, in the earth, and among the nations to mark the progress of His work; and he said that when we see these signs fulfilled we are to know that He is near, even at the door. Thus signs are given to help us keep pace with our high priest in the sanctuary above and to **induce us to prepare for His coming, as Noah prepared the ark.**

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS COMING SOON?

Prophecy not only foretells the manner and object of Christ's coming, but presents tokens by which men are to know when it is near. Said Jesus: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." Luke 21:25. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Mark 13:24-26. The revelator thus describes the first of the signs to precede the second advent: "There

was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood." Revelation 6:12.

Did these events take place? Oh yes they occurred.

- ✓ 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.**
- ✓ Twenty-five years later appeared the next sign mentioned in the prophecy--the darkening of the sun and moon. "In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." Mark 13:24. 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. "Almost, if not altogether alone, as the most mysterious and as yet unexplained phenomenon of its kind, . . . stands the dark day of **May 19, 1780**,--a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England."--R. M. Devens, Our First Century, page 89. "Candles were used; and hearth fires shone as brightly as on a **moonless evening in autumn.** . . . Fowls retired to their roosts and went to sleep, cattle gathered at the pasture bars and lowed, frogs peeped, birds sang their evening songs, and bats flew about. But the **human knew that night had not come.**
- ✓ **In 1833**, two years after Miller began to present in public the evidences of Christ's soon coming, 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.**" Matthew 24:29. 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." Revelation 6:13. This prophecy received a striking and impressive fulfillment in the great meteoric shower of **November 13, 1833.**

In the book of Revelation John describes signs that were to take place when the sixth seal is opened. The three events took place as described in the above statements. After these signs Rev 6:14 says the heavens departed as a scroll a clear picture of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

THE LAST GENERATION

Generation is the most appropriate object to help us realize whatever time we are living. Jesus said:

Matthew 24:33-34 *"So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, [even] at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This **generation** shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."*

What generation would exist before Christ comes?

Matthew 24:37-39 But as the days of Noe [were], so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were **eating and drinking, marrying and**

giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Gluttony and intemperance lie at the foundation of the great moral depravity in our world. Satan is aware of this and he is constantly tempting men and women to indulge the **taste at the expense of health and even life itself. Eating, drinking, and dressing are made the aim of life with the world.** Just such a state of things existed before the Flood. And this state of dissipation is one of the marked evidences of the soon close of this earth's history.--Letter 34, 1875.

Are you seeing a repeat of history?

In the days of Noah the **overwhelming** majority was opposed to the truth, and enamored with a tissue of falsehoods. The land was filled with violence. **War, crime, murder, was the order of the day.** Just so will it be before Christ's second coming.--IBC 1090 (1891)

SUMMARY POINT

Dear **Brethren and Sisters**: Do we believe with **all the heart** that Christ is soon coming and that we are now having the last message of mercy that is ever to be given to a guilty world? Is **our example** what it should be? Do we, by **our lives** and **holy conversation**, show to those around us that we are looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who shall change these vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body? *I fear that we do not believe and realize these things as we should....* There is too **much seeking after amusements and things to take the attention in this world**; the mind is left to **run too much upon dress**, and **the tongue is engaged too often in light and trifling conversation, which gives the lie to our profession**, for our conversation is not in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour. {EW 111.1}

Read the history of the antediluvians in Patriarchs and prophets chapter 7. Surely this generation shall not pass away....

WELCOME TO TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY WHERE WE SHALL LOOK AT THE THIRD ANGELS MESSAGE FROM ITS RISE TO ITS CLOSE.