

The Triumph of God's Love



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Rev. 22:11, 12; Jer. 30:5–7; Ps. 91:1–11; Jer. 25:33; Rev. 21:2; Rev. 20:11–15.*

Memory Text: “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’” (*Revelation 21:3, 4, NKJV*).

We can face the future with hope. Although challenging times are coming, whatever suffering we must go through, whatever hardships we must endure, whatever sorrows we experience, if we have hope a better day is coming, we can live life today with purpose and joy. Franklin D. Roosevelt was president during 1933–1945, one of the most difficult periods of U.S. history. He was paralyzed by polio and unable to walk unaided. He once wrote, “We have always held to the hope, the belief, the conviction, that there is a better life, a better world, beyond the horizon.” Albert Einstein, one of the world’s most brilliant men, wrote, “Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.” Alfred Lord Tennyson, a popular English poet during Queen Victoria’s reign, once wrote, “Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering ‘It will be happier.’”

In this quarter’s final lesson, we will see Christ’s steadfast love during the most exciting time in the history of the universe and His complete triumph in the great controversy. The Bible’s last book, Revelation, gives us hope for today, tomorrow, and forever.

* Study this week’s lesson, based on chapters 39–42 of *The Great Controversy*, to prepare for Sabbath, June 29.

Hope in the Time of Trouble

Read Revelation 22:11, 12; Daniel 12:1, 2; and Jeremiah 30:5–7. What events occur just before the Second Advent?

The close of human probation is followed by a time of trouble “ ‘such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time.’ ” Revelation 16 describes seven last plagues that will be poured out on the wicked world. But, as with the plagues that fell on Egypt, God’s people will be shielded from them. Note the promise in Daniel: “ ‘And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book’ ” (*Dan. 12:1, NKJV*). This must be referring to the “book of life” (see *Phil. 4:3; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 20:12, 15; Rev. 22:19*). If we have stayed faithful to Jesus, our names will not be blotted out of the book of life (*Rev. 3:5*).

Read 1 John 3:1–3, John 8:29, and John 14:30. What is the only sufficient preparation for the coming time of trouble?

In the time of trouble, God’s people have a personal relationship with Jesus so deep that nothing can change it. Their consummate desire is to please Him in all things so that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, they will be as pure as He is pure. There was nothing in Christ’s heart that responded to Satan’s deceptions. We can reflect this aspect of His character, as well.

Read Psalm 27:5, Psalm 91:1–11, and Revelation 3:10–12. What reassuring promises does God give us for the time of trouble?

There are some who have misunderstood the concept of living through the time of trouble without a mediator. Jesus ceases His mediation in heaven’s sanctuary when everyone has made their final decision for or against Him. But this does not mean we are alone during this time, trusting our own strength. Jesus has assured us He will be with us always (*Matt. 28:20*). Faith trusts when it cannot see and believes even when the world around us is falling apart. During the time of trouble, our faith strengthens and our longing for eternity increases so that our one desire is to live forever with Jesus.

Hope in Jesus' Soon Return

Read John 14:1–3 and Titus 2:11–14. In the light of the challenges of the future and the coming time of trouble, why are these verses so encouraging?

Jesus' words, “ ‘Let not your heart be troubled,’ ” are His reassurance that He will never leave us and is coming again to take us home. This world is not our home. A better day is coming. Once in every 25 verses, the New Testament speaks of the return of our Lord. When the days are dark and the oppressive enactments of a church-state power threaten our lives, the promise of Christ's coming fills our hearts with hope. This is the “blessed hope” that has inspired the faithful people of God in every generation.

Read Revelation 6:15–17 and Isaiah 25:8, 9. Contrast the attitudes of the saved and the lost revealed in these verses. What explains the difference between these two mindsets?

The wicked realize the horrible consequences of sin while the righteous have accepted the marvelous provisions of grace. Rebellion against God leads to fear, guilt, condemnation, and eventually eternal loss. Our response to His saving grace leads to forgiveness, peace, and joy eternally at His glorious return.

Read Revelation 15:3, 4 and Revelation 19:7. How will the redeemed respond to the glorious salvation provided so freely through Christ?

“The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified. . . . That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside His glory and humiliate Himself from love to man will ever excite the wonder and adoration of the universe.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 651.

Read Revelation 12:17; Revelation 17:13, 14; and Revelation 19:11–16. Carefully notice the progression of these verses. What does the progression in these verses say about earth's last war and Christ's ultimate victory?

The Millennium on Earth

Revelation 19 ends with a dramatic portrayal of the return of Jesus and the destruction of the wicked. But the story is not over. Revelation 20 introduces us to a period lasting 1,000 years, known as the “millennium.”

Read Revelation 20:1–3. What is Satan’s fate when Jesus returns?

The imagery in Revelation 20:1–3 is symbolic. Satan is not literally bound with a chain and locked in a pit. For 1,000 years, he is confined to this desolate, depopulated earth, bound by the circumstances he himself has created. In 2 Peter 2:4, we read that Satan and his angels were reserved for punishment by “chains of darkness.” Satan will be confined to the earth by a chain of circumstances, with no one to tempt. For 1,000 years, he will see the devastation, destruction, and disaster that his rebellion has created.

The Greek word translated “bottomless pit” is the same word from which we get our English word “abyss.” It also is the same word used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, to describe the earth at Creation. “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep” (*Gen. 1:2, NKJV*). In the Septuagint, the word “deep” here is the Greek word *abyssos*, “abyss.” It describes a desolate earth. The “bottomless pit” is not some subterranean cavern or some yawning chasm somewhere out there in the universe. Satan’s work of sin and destruction, along with the tremendous chaos preceding the Second Coming, has brought the earth back to a dark, disorganized mass like its condition at the beginning of Creation.

Read Jeremiah 4:23–26 and Jeremiah 25:33. How does the biblical prophet describe this scene?

The prophet here emphasizes the catastrophic destruction at the second coming of Christ and that no person is left alive on earth during this thousand-year period. Satan and his evil angels are left to contemplate the havoc caused by his rebellion. The entire universe recognizes anew that the wages of sin is death. God deals with the sin problem so that it will never rise again (*Nah. 1:9*). There are three prime ways God does this. First, He reveals His limitless love, passionate desire, and relentless efforts to save all humanity. Second, He reveals His justice, fairness, and righteousness. Third, He allows the universe to see the ultimate results of sin and rebellion.

Judgment in the Millennium

Read Revelation 20:4–6. What are the righteous doing during the 1,000 years, and why is it important?

During the millennium, the righteous will have an opportunity to observe firsthand God’s justice and love in how He has dealt with the sin problem. Who doesn’t have questions they would like to ask God about a lot of things? Now, during the millennium in heaven, the redeemed get to ask those questions. If a loved one or close friend is absent from heaven, the saved have the opportunity to understand God’s decisions more fully. In a new way, more forcefully than ever before, the redeemed will grasp God’s powerful attempts to save every person who has ever lived. They will realize anew that everyone who is lost has missed out on heaven because of their own personal rejection of Christ. Only then does God bring final judgment—the second death, which is eternal destruction—on the lost.

Read Revelation 20:7–9. How do the 1,000 years conclude? What is the fate of Satan and his followers?

For 1,000 years, Satan has had no one to tempt or deceive. He and his angels have been alone to reflect on the deadly consequences of sin. At the end of the millennium, the wicked dead are resurrected to face the judgment and receive their final reward (*Rev. 20:5*).

Now Satan has a vast army of followers. Although Satan has suffered defeat after defeat in the great controversy, he is encouraged as he sees the huge throng of the lost. Not yet ready to end his rebellion, he goes out to deceive these “nations.” Satan inspires them to make one last great effort to overthrow God and set up their own kingdom. The term “Gog and Magog” is used to symbolize Satan and the unsaved of all ages. Satan and his followers surround “the camp of the saints and the beloved city” (*Rev. 20:9, NKJV*).

At the close of the millennium, not only are all the wicked raised to life, but the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descends to earth from heaven (*Rev. 21:2*)! The saints have been living and reigning with Christ in the New Jerusalem for the millennium. Now, at the end of the 1,000 years, the city descends to earth along with God, Jesus, the angels, and all the redeemed. Everyone is present for the final battle of the great controversy. Sin is about to be eradicated once and for all!

What does the timing of the final judgment say about God’s character?

Two Eternities

Read 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10, 11; and Revelation 20:11–15. What do they say about why the wicked are raised to life again?

To resolve the sin problem so evil never arises again, everyone must be convinced that God has been fair and just in all His ways. Ultimately, every knee shall bow and acknowledge God’s justice in the great controversy, even Satan and his evil angels, and that there was never any justification for rebellion against God. Notice this insight from Ellen G. White: “As soon as the books of record are opened, and the eye of Jesus looks upon the wicked, they are conscious of every sin which they have ever committed. They see just where their feet diverged from the path of purity and holiness, just how far pride and rebellion have carried them in the violation of the law of God. The seductive temptations which they encouraged by indulgence in sin, the blessings perverted, the messengers of God despised, the warnings rejected, the waves of mercy beaten back by the stubborn, unrepentant heart—all appear as if written in letters of fire. . . .

“The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 666, 668.

Read Revelation 20:9; Psalm 37:20; and Malachi 4:1, 2. What insights do these passages give us about the ultimate destruction of sin and sinners and the reward of the righteous?

The good news is that Satan and his evil angels will be destroyed in the lake of fire. Sin and sinners will be consumed. According to Revelation 20:9, they will be devoured, destroyed, and not eternally tormented. The next verse uses the expression “forever and ever.” Depending on the context, the word “forever” does not always mean “endless” but, until something is completely accomplished. (See *Exod. 21:6; 1 Sam. 1:22, 28; Jude 7; and 2 Pet. 2:4–6.*) For the lost, the destruction itself, not the act of destroying, is eternal. God is not the eternal torturer.

In the end, one of two eternities await us all. The lost, unfortunately, receive the “wages” they have earned—eternal death. Why, then, is our only hope of not getting what we deserve, which is death, found in trusting in Jesus’ righteousness?

Further Thought: “There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God’s people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home. . . .

“There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 675, 677.

“With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God’s handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation—suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator’s name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 677, 678.

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 Why do you think God has allowed sin to go on for so long? At the same time, no human being suffers in this world longer than their own existence here. That is, no one suffers more than his or her own lifetime. How short is a human lifetime compared to the thousands of years of sin? How might this perspective help us deal with the difficult question of evil?
- 2 How does the thousand-year period known as the millennium fit into the plan of salvation? Think about what it says about the character of God that—not until all of the redeemed will have had a chance to see the justice and fairness and love of God—will final judgment be brought upon the lost.

Refuge for Russian Speakers

By ANDREW McCHESNEY

Ukrainian pastor Vadym Krynychny faced a major challenge finding a building for a Russian-speaking church in the Spanish city of Valencia. But, with prayer, he managed to lease a hall seating 100 people in the city center for a token 500 euros (US\$550) a month.

“It is worth much more,” Vadym said.

The hall was large for the initial group of 26 worshipers, but Vadym got to work on outreach programs. The church began to host a get-together with a meal on Sundays. Russian-speaking children were invited to special activities. Additional programs were organized around such holidays as New Year’s and Easter. Concerts proved especially popular, filling the church to overflowing and sometimes requiring the rental of a larger hall.

The church forged strong ties with the local Russian-speaking community and became a center for Russian speakers. About 80 percent of Spain’s estimated 400,000 Russian speakers live in Valencia and along the nearby Mediterranean coast. Of those 400,000 people, at least 500 are Adventists.

But the first person baptized at the new church was not from Russia or another former Soviet republic. The woman was born in Iran and had been raised in a non-Christian world religion. She spoke Russian fluently after studying for 12 years in the former Soviet republic of Belarus, and she came to the church after someone invited her off the street.

After 25 baptisms and several former Adventist families recommitted their hearts to Jesus, weekly church attendance stood at 65 adults and 40 children when the conflict erupted in Ukraine in 2022.

Vadym realized with astonishment that the church was well positioned to help people fleeing the conflict. The church quickly used its local connections to establish a refugee center. In the first two months of the conflict, 200 people visited the center, receiving lodging and food. About half of them were Adventists. Since then, many more people have received assistance.

“Many have come to us, knowing no one in Spain,” Vadym said. “But they come to us because we speak Russian, and they seek something familiar.”

He credited God for positioning the church to help refugees even before the conflict started. He said he longed to share the hope of Jesus’ soon coming with them and all Russian speakers in Spain. “We are concentrating all our efforts on meeting the needs of these people,” he said.



Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this Sabbath will help spread the gospel in the Euro-Asia Division, the home of many Russian speakers. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

Part I: Overview

Key Text: *Revelation 21:3, 4*

Study Focus: *Jer. 30:5–7; Rev. 3:10; Isa. 33:15, 16; Ps. 91:1–11; Rev. 1:7; Rev. 19:11–16; Rev. 20:1–15; Jer. 25:33; Jer. 4:23–28; Rev. 21:1–4; Matt. 8:11; Isa. 65:17, 22, 23; Rev. 22:1–5, 11.*

Introduction: This week's lesson wraps up our study, highlighting the final developments in the cosmic war between God and Satan. Among the notable events that transpire during the culmination of the great controversy are: (1) the time of trouble; (2) the second coming of Jesus; (3) the executive judgment in heaven during the millennium, with a synopsis of events both on earth and in heaven at that time; and (4) the restoration of all things for eternity. The Bible promises that the great controversy will end in God's victory. Scripture calls us to trust God, participate with Him in the salvation of as many souls as possible, and share in His past (the Cross), present (individual, church, and salvation), and future (final cosmic) victory.

Lesson Themes: This week's study focuses on four related themes:

1. God Himself will sustain and protect His people during the most brutal parts of the final battle of the great controversy.
2. The great controversy will end with God's victory over the devil, over evil and sin, and over suffering and death. This threefold victory is assured because it has already been secured by Christ through His death and resurrection.
3. We share in God's victory when we accept it by faith and allow the Holy Spirit to work it out in us.
4. God's victory will culminate in the second coming of Jesus, in the millennial judgment, and in the restoration of all things.

Part II: Commentary

The Close of Probation

The close of probation is a topic that often induces fear in many people. Probation closes for each individual at his or her death. That is, the window of opportunity for an individual to respond to God's grace has been closed by death. His or her attitude toward God's revealed grace will have eternal consequences. God is righteous and will treat each individual's case according to the light that he or she received; but our individual response decisively matters.

However, Adventists understand from Scripture that, apart from the closing of probation at one's death, there will be a moment in the history of the great controversy when God will declare that the time when people can accept His forgiving grace in order to be saved has ended. That moment will be the point of no return, and no one will be saved beyond that time. The world then will live under the pronouncement recorded in the book of Revelation: " 'Let the one who does wrong still do wrong, and the one who is filthy still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous still practice righteousness, and the one who is holy still keep himself holy' " (*Rev. 22:11, NASB*). Truly concerned for their salvation, many Christians and Adventists ask such questions as: What if the moment of the close of probation will catch me off guard or unaware? What if I will not be completely ready at that moment?

At least two clarifications are necessary here.

First, the close of probation is real, and it will take place. The deceptions, intrigues, and evils of the devil will not continue forever. Sin, suffering, and death will not hold sway eternally. To eternalize the devil, evil, and death would mean that God is not a God of love and righteousness. But because He is, He will put an end to the sources, and forces, of evil. God has patiently waited and given every opportunity to humans to test His promises, to come to know Him, and to return to Him and to His kingdom of grace. How much God would have loved for all humanity to accept His gospel! But there will be a moment when God must say, "Enough; it is finished."

Second, God will not withdraw His gift of sustaining grace from His people, despite His withdrawal of mercy and forgiving grace to the unrepentant at the close of probation. This point is very important: the end of probation does not imply that God's love and grace for humanity have reached their limits or that they have been consumed. God never ceases to be the God of love, grace, and righteousness portrayed in the Bible. For this reason, there will be no one after probation closes who would have sincerely wanted to receive God's grace and who would have responded with faith to God's mercy to whom God would say, "Sorry, too late; I would love to have saved you, but the grace period is ended."

God's closure of probation will be His confirmation that every individual has made his or her final decision about His grace and His kingdom. At a future moment in history, the historical setting of the world will be such that all the inhabitants of the earth will make this final decision and will side with either God or Satan. However, that decision will not be made in the impulse of the moment. Rather, each person's decision for eternity will be made based on his or her free choice and in full consciousness of its consequences. Just as Northern Israel and Judah when they rejected God's covenant and Messiah, some will decide they do not want to be with the God of the Bible. Others will agree with Lucifer's lie that they are gods and immortal; they do not relish the idea of being with God in His kingdom. God is saddened by these unalterable decisions; He

provided all the evidence and love necessary to save them, but He will respect their final choice. Others, however, decide to accept God's grace because they love Him and want to stay with Him forever.

On another note, the close of probation does not imply that, after that moment, God's faithful people will stand without His presence and grace and covering righteousness. Christ assured us that He will be with us " 'always, to the end of the age' " (*Matt. 28:20, NASB*). The empowerment of the Holy Spirit, which we will receive in order to give the loud cry, will not be removed from us. All God's people, from Adam and Abel to Abraham and Moses, from David and Isaiah to Paul and the last Christian sealed before probation closes, will be saved exclusively by Christ's righteousness and mediation, through faith. Thus, the idea that some Christians at the end of time will stand on their own merit and power is not biblical.

The Biblical New Heaven and the New Earth

Christians generally talk and sing about heaven as the place of their final destination and eternal rest. However, we must maintain the biblical understanding of heaven and guard against falling into pagan or philosophical views on Paradise. According to many worldviews—such as Greek, Hindu, or Buddhist philosophies—heaven is an alleged transcendent, timeless, and spaceless sphere that only a disembodied human mind or soul could reach. In Greek philosophy, the human mind that reaches heaven somehow keeps its identity and consciousness. In Hinduism, Buddhism, and Neoplatonism, the human consciousness that reaches heaven must disappear by dissolving into the universal consciousness.

As a result of the influence of classical Greek philosophy on traditional Christianity, most Christians now believe in the immortality of the soul and in a spiritual, as opposed to a material, heaven. These Christians do not realize that these philosophical concepts create irreconcilable contradictions in their theology and lives. On the one hand, when thinking about death and heaven, traditional Christians think in Greek philosophical terms: at death, the immortal soul goes to a transcendent, timeless, spaceless realm, called either hell or heaven. On the other hand, these same Christians believe in the exceedingly clear biblical teaching of the resurrection of the body. *However, they do not realize that the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body are simply incompatible and generate a lot of inconsistencies.*

If our souls are immortal and are in heaven with God, why resurrect the body? Under such circumstances, the resurrection of the body would imply that the soul would leave the spiritual realm of heaven and re-enter the material, temporal, and spatial sphere. Even so, if only the soul is immortal, one must ask, *Will the resurrection of the body be permanent? Will the body now also be eternal?*

The biblical teachings on human nature and the resurrection eliminate

all these inconsistencies and problems. First, the biblical teaching of the unitary human nature indicates that humans do not possess an immortal soul but are complex, indivisible, integrated living beings. At His return, Jesus will resurrect the whole human being. Second, the biblical teaching of the nature of humanity rejects Greek dualism and its concept that heaven is a transcendent, timeless, spaceless, divine sphere.

According to the Bible, at death our being is not divided. We do not survive as an ethereal soul, and that soul does not transition, fully conscious, to a state of transcendence beyond the created universe. When we die, our entire being dies. However, when Christ returns, He will resurrect our entire being and welcome us into His real, historical, temporal, and spatial kingdom. Yes, at the second coming of Christ, we will travel with Him to the throne of God, to the heavenly sanctuary, somewhere in the center of the universe. But that travel will take place in the temporal and spatial universe, meaning we will be traveling in space and time. We will never go beyond the universe. In fact, no created being will ever be transcendent because only God is transcendent or beyond the created universe. To want to reach the transcendent is to want to be God.

The millennial judgment in heaven will also be a historical event that will take place in space and time in God's heavenly sanctuary before His throne, which is also located in a central place in the universe. After that judgment, we will return to earth. Following God's executive judgment against the devil and the rest of the rebels, God will restore our planet to its original beauty and perfection. The new earth will be our home. There we will live as we were originally intended to live before the Fall: smelling flowers, cultivating a garden, studying a leaf, playing with a lion, meeting and interacting with redeemed of all ages, as well as with angels and other created beings. Most important, we will enjoy the privilege of face-to-face communion with God; we will worship Him in person. The earth and the universe will be reconciled and will be brought back to the harmony and unity that existed before the Fall. We will be able to travel freely throughout the universe. The reason we cannot travel to heaven now is not because of constraints or barriers of time, space, substance, or speed, but sin. When the great controversy finally is over and sin is removed once and for all, the new (renewed) earth will be integrated with heaven, and then will be realized that most precious of Bible promises: a new earth and a new heaven.

Part III: Life Application

- 1. Do you have Adventists in your congregation who are afraid to talk about last-day events? Are you one of them? How would you help**

them to overcome this fear? How could you and your Adventist community communicate our biblical message as good news rather than as some warped version, produced by Hollywood, of a scary, postapocalyptic movie? On the other hand, what is the best way to present realistically many of the darker aspects of the great controversy, such as religious persecution and the time of trouble?

2. Do people in your culture believe in the return of a divinity or of a great guru? What does this belief tell us about humanity's hope for the return of a savior from "the beyond"? How could you share the hope of the second coming of Jesus Christ with such an audience? What points would you emphasize?

3. Some Christians or secular persons believe that the second coming of Christ is merely a symbol of a profound moral transformation of the human individual or society. How could you explain to such persons that Christ's coming will be a literal, visible, and audible event, one in which Jesus Himself will enter into our history, time, and space, in person?

4. What do the people in your culture think of heaven? What is problematic about their views of heaven, as compared with Scripture? How could you share with them the biblical description of heaven? What points in the biblical view of heaven would be especially attractive to the people in your culture?

The Gospel of Mark, our study for this quarter written by Thomas Shepherd, can be divided into two halves. Most of the first eight chapters deal with the question of who Jesus is. The answer is displayed in Jesus' teachings and miracles, which clearly reveal that He is the Messiah. The second half of the book (*Mark 8:31 until the end of the book*) answer the question of where Jesus is going. The answer, of course, is to the Cross. This gospel shows us the darkness that Christ experienced—the cost of our salvation. But the Cross is not the end of the journey. After His resurrection, Jesus plans a meeting with His disciples in Galilee—and, as we know, the Christian church began. It is a remarkable story, told in a terse, fast-moving style with little commentary from Mark himself. Mark simply tells the story and then allows the words, the deeds, and the actions to speak for themselves, regarding the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by this study.

Lesson 1—The Beginning of the Gospel

The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: **The Failed Missionary** (*Acts 13:1–5, 13*)

MONDAY: **A Second Chance** (*Acts 15:36–39*)

TUESDAY: **The Messenger** (*Mark 1:1–8*)

WEDNESDAY: **Jesus' Baptism** (*Mark 1:9–13*)

THURSDAY: **The Gospel According to Jesus** (*Mark 1:14, 15*)

Memory Text—*Mark 1:14, 15*

Sabbath Gem: This week's lesson will focus on the identity of Mark as recorded in Scripture, from his early failure to becoming a restored missionary.

Lesson 2—A Day in the Ministry of Jesus

The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: **“Follow Me”** (*Mark 1:16–20*)

MONDAY: **An Unforgettable Worship Service** (*Mark 1:21–28*)

TUESDAY: **More Sabbath Ministry** (*Mark 1:29–34*)

WEDNESDAY: **The Secret of Jesus' Ministry** (*Mark 1:35–39*)

THURSDAY: **Can You Keep a Secret?** (*Mark 1:40–45*)

Memory Text—*Mark 1:17*

Sabbath Gem: The emphasis in the beginning of the Gospel of Mark is on action, particularly of Jesus' healing of people. Mark often uses the word *immediately* to illustrate the fast-action movement of Jesus' ministry.

Lessons for People Who are Legally Blind The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is available free in braille, on MP3 disc, and via online download to people who are legally blind and individuals who cannot hold or focus on ink print. Contact Christian Record Services Inc., P.O. Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506-0097. Phone: 402-488-0981, option 3; email: services@christianrecord.org; website: www.christianrecord.org.