

# Ablaze With God's Glory




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## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week's Study:** *1 Thess. 5:1–6; John 8:32; Rev. 18:1; Rev. 4:11; Exod. 33:18, 19; Rev. 5:6, 12; Rev. 13:8.*

**Memory Text:** “After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory” (*Revelation 18:1, NKJV*).

Sooner or later, final events will unfold. Exactly when, exactly how—we have not been told. But we have been told enough. Some kind of legislation enforcing Sunday keeping, in contrast to Sabbath keeping, will occur. Revelation has revealed to us the crucial issues at stake, the crucial players involved, and in broad sweeps, it has told us what will happen when, in contrast to the worship of the One “‘who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’ ” (*Rev. 14:7, NKJV*), people—all “whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (*Rev. 13:8, NKJV*)—will worship the beast and his image. In other words, all those who have chosen to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and obey His commandments—their names remain in the book of life. How much better to be in the register of God than in the records of man.

God has raised up the Seventh-day Adventist Church to preach this message to the world. Thus, we need, ourselves, to be converted to the truth as it is in Jesus, and to have been transformed and made new by the “everlasting gospel” of Revelation 14:6, which is centered on Christ’s death for us, the assurance of our salvation in Him.

\* Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 24.

# Preparing for the Final Crisis

**Read** 1 Thessalonians 5:1–6. What admonition does the apostle Paul give us regarding the last days of human history?



The apostle Paul urged the believers at Thessaloniki to “watch” and “be sober” in the context of the second coming of Christ. And if Paul would say that to believers then, what would he say to us today?

He also declared that they were “children of light” (*1 Thess. 5:5, NIV*) and that they were not in “darkness, so that this day [the return of Christ]” (*1 Thess. 5:4, NIV*) should overtake them “as a thief” (*1 Thess. 5:4, NKJV*). Jesus used the expression to “watch” in connection with earnest, heartfelt prayer (*Matt. 24:42, Matt. 26:40, 41*). To watch is to be spiritually alert. To be sober minded is to be serious about the times that we are living in and focused on the things that really matter.

Ellen G. White adds: “We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 28.

And while it might be a surprise to the world, it should not be a surprise to us. Though we don’t know when it will happen, we can see enough to know that it is coming, and that now, today, is the day to be ready.

**Review** Daniel 2, and note the sequence of kingdoms that came and went, exactly as predicted. What should this teach us about how we can trust that what God says will happen, will indeed happen?



Christ has given us these last-day messages so that, knowing what is coming, we can prepare for it. The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, combined with the modern gift of prophecy, give us divine insight into what is coming upon this world. The prophetic Word of God outlines salvation history in advance, and Daniel 2 provides powerful, rational evidence that we can trust God.

**Paul says not “to sleep” as others do. What does that mean, and how can we know if we are, indeed, sleeping and, if we are, what will it take to wake us?**

## Knowing Truth

**Read** John 7:17, John 8:32, and John 17:17. What promises does Jesus give regarding knowing truth and where is it found?

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God’s final appeal to His people is to flee the errors of Babylon and walk in the light of eternal truth found in His Word. The key to everything is the Bible. As long as people stick to the Bible and follow what it teaches, they will not be deceived in the final crisis, particularly regarding the Sabbath.

The message of the second angel appeals to us to accept truth rather than error, Scripture rather than tradition, and the teachings of God’s Word rather than the errors of false doctrine.

The third angel’s message, which follows the first two angels’, presents a warning against the mark of the beast. Throughout the prophecies of the Bible, a beast represents a political or religious power. The sea beast of Revelation 13 and 14 arises out of Rome as a worldwide system of worship. Eventually this Roman power extends its influence over the whole world and will lead out in a movement to unite church and state. The goal will be to achieve world unity at a time of economic upheaval, natural catastrophes, social turmoil, international political crisis, and global conflict.

And the United States will eventually take the lead in this global confederation. “Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome. The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 588.

These messages conclude with an urgent appeal for Christ’s faithful followers to keep the commandments of God through the living faith of Jesus dwelling in their hearts (*Rev. 14:12*).

**How do you understand Jesus’ words: “the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32, NKJV)? What does that mean? How has the truth set you free? What does it mean to be “free” in this context?**

## The Reformation Continues

God has raised up a last-day people to stand on the shoulders of the great Reformers of the past with the Bible as their only creed, Christ alone as their only Source of salvation, the Holy Spirit as their only Source of strength, and the return of our Lord as the consummation of all their hopes. Truths long obscured by the darkness of error and tradition, including the true Bible Sabbath, will be proclaimed to the world just before the return of our Lord.

The three angels' messages gave birth to this last-day movement to complete the Reformation and to participate with Christ in finishing His work on earth. The great prophecies of the Bible's last book reveal a divine movement of destiny arising out of disappointment to proclaim God's final message to the world. Revelation 14 describes a worldwide church spanning the globe with the good news of the eternal gospel.

The three angels of Revelation 14 are joined by a fourth angel in Revelation 18. This angel gives power to the proclamation of the three angels so that the "earth [is] lightened with [God's] glory" (*Rev. 18:1*). Chapter 18 focuses on the major events leading up to the climax of human history and the final, ultimate triumph of the gospel.

**Read Revelation 18:1.** What three things does John tell us about this angel? (*See also Hab. 2:14.*)

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The angel who comes down from the glorious presence of God in the throne room of the sanctuary is commissioned to proclaim God's last message of mercy and to warn the inhabitants of the earth of what is coming upon planet Earth.

The text says that the angel comes with "great authority." The New Testament Greek word for "authority" is *exousia*. Jesus uses this word in the Gospel of Matthew in harmony with the sending out of His disciples. In Matthew 10:1, Jesus gives His disciples "authority" (*NIV*) over the principalities and powers of evil. He sends them out with the divine power to be victorious in the battle between good and evil. In Matthew 28:18, 19, He once again sends them out, but this time with "all authority" "in heaven and on earth to go and "make disciples of all the nations' " (*NKJV*).

**Ultimately, how do the issues in the last days (as they really do every day) come down to *authority*? Whose authority do we follow: God's, our own, the beast power's, or someone else's? Whose authority are you following now?**

## God's Glory Fills the Earth

**Read** Revelation 4:11, Revelation 5:12, Revelation 19:1, and Revelation 21:26. What words are associated with the glory of God that fills the earth as described in Revelation 18:1?

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The great controversy between good and evil in the universe also is about God's honor or reputation. Satan, a rebel angel, has declared that God is unjust, that He demands worship but gives little in return. The evil one declares that God's law restricts our freedom and limits our joy.

Jesus' life, death, and resurrection exploded that myth. The One who created us plunged into the snake pit of this world to redeem us. On the cross, He answered Satan's charges and demonstrated that God is both loving and just.

Charmed by His love, concerned about His honor, His end-time people reveal His glory—His loving, self-sacrificing character to a self-centered, godless world, and the earth is illuminated by the character of God.

**Read** Exodus 33:18, 19. How does God reveal His glory to Moses? What is God's glory?

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God's glory is His character. The earth will be filled with the glory of God when we are filled with the love of God and our characters are changed by redeeming love.

Revealing His love in our personal lives reveals His glory, His character, to the world. The last message to be proclaimed to a world engulfed in spiritual darkness carried by three angels in the midst of heaven is "Fear God and give glory to Him" (*Rev. 14:7, NKJV*).

There is no glory for us in our good works, or our righteousness, or our goodness. "The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other. . . . This is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 19. Ellen G. White also writes: "What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself."—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 456.

No glory for ourselves but, yes, glory to God instead.

## The Lamb, the Slain Lamb

There are many symbols in Revelation, biblical symbols of importance; that is, a dragon in heaven (*Rev. 12:3, 4, 7*), angels flying in the midst of heaven (*Rev. 14:6*), a woman riding a scarlet beast (*Rev. 17:3*), and so forth. They are in the Word of God; the Holy Spirit inspired John to put them there, and they have important roles in revealing truth to those who read the words of this book and do them, for, as it says, “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near” (*Rev. 1:3, NKJV*).

There is, however, another image that appears, again and again, all through the book of Revelation. What is the image, and what does it represent?

**Read Revelation 5:6, 8, 12; Revelation 7:17; Revelation 14:1; Revelation 15:3; Revelation 19:7; Revelation 21:22, 23; and Revelation 22:1, 3. What is the meaning of the symbolism of the Lamb, and why would it appear so many times in the book of Revelation?**

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Of course, as the opening words of the book say, this is a revelation “of Jesus Christ.” And not only is He a Lamb but also a Lamb “slain” (*Rev. 5:6, 12; Rev. 13:8*). That is, Jesus Christ crucified. Here is the heart and soul, not only of all the Bible but also of the book of Revelation and of the three angels’ messages. We cannot be faithful to our calling, we cannot do the work that God has raised up this church to do, unless we have the Lamb, the slain Lamb, Jesus crucified, a sacrifice for our sins, as the focal point of our message.

“We must intentionally place the Lamb that was slain at the very center of our doctrines and mission and at the heart of every sermon we preach, every article we write, every prayer we make, every song we sing, every Bible study we give, and in everything we do. Let the love revealed by the Lamb on the cross transform the way we treat each other and move us to also care for the world.”—Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “The Closing of the Cosmic Conflict: Role of the Three Angels’ Messages,” unpublished manuscript, p. 70.

That is, amid the imagery of dangerous beasts, of a dragon making war, of plagues, of persecution, and of the mark of the beast, there remains front and center the Lamb, the Lamb slain. And He alone, and what He has done for us, is doing now, and will do before it’s all over—He is, ultimately, what the three angels’ messages are about.

**Why is keeping the slain Lamb at the center of our message crucial not only for leading others to Him but also for your own spiritual life?**

**Further Thought:** “Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.

“The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord’s side.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1 Ellen G. White states that “the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message . . . in verity.”—*Evangelism*, p. 190. What does that mean? What relationship does justification by faith have to the three angels’ messages?
- 2 Read Revelation 14:12 again. What is the difference between keeping the commandments of God and legalism? When does obedience become legalism? In what ways can someone who doesn’t keep the commandments of God still be a legalist?
- 3 What answer can you give to those who criticize us when we talk about the ferocious beasts and fearsome warning found in the book of Revelation? Besides the obvious answer, which is that we talk about them because, well, they are there, written in the book, what other answers can you give?
- 4 Discuss in class current world events. What things have you seen happen that could help lead to final events? How do we strike a balance between being aware of the times we are living in and not getting caught up in fruitless speculation about what hasn’t been revealed to us yet?

## Training Boys to Read the Bible

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

What is the secret for teaching a child to spend personal time with God?

Christian Müller, an Argentine volunteer at a Seventh-day Adventist school in Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan, surprised me with his answer as we spoke in his home. I was in town to collect mission stories for Adventist Mission.

Christian said his six-year-old son, Thomas, had interrupted his personal devotions that morning.

“Normally, I would have asked him to wait,” Christian told me. “But he held up his Bible in his little hands and said, ‘Papa, I don’t understand what I am reading. Can you help me?’ What else could I do but help him?”

I expressed astonishment that a such a small boy was reading his Bible in the morning. My incredulity grew as Christian explained that Thomas and his seven-year-old brother, Lukas, read their Bibles every morning.

“How did you teach them to have morning devotions?” I asked.

Christian thought for a moment. “Actually, I have never taught them to have morning devotions,” he said.

The boys began having personal devotions around the time that they were learning to walk. Christian and his wife, Romina, would sit at opposite sides of the kitchen table to read their Bibles for personal devotions every morning in their home in Argentina. The boys would wake up and, naturally, want to be with their parents. Crawling out of bed, they would find their father and mother in the kitchen. Christian told the boys from the beginning that it was very important for Daddy and Mommy to spend time with God in the morning and that the boys could not interrupt the morning devotions. If the boys wanted to remain in the kitchen, they needed to be quiet and have their own devotions. The boys chose to stay. Initially, they could not read, so they quietly leafed through Bible picture books. As they grew older, they began to read their Bibles. After moving to Kyrgyzstan, the parents and the boys had morning devotions in their own rooms.

This was the secret for teaching a child to spend personal time with God in the morning. “I never once told the boys that they needed to start having morning devotions,” Christian said. “They just saw that their mother and I had devotions and followed our example.”




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*Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in the fourth quarter of 2017 helped enlarge the Seventh-day Adventist school where Christian volunteered in Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan. Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this Sabbath that will help spread the gospel around the world. Read more about Thomas and Lukas online: [bit.ly/mission-kids](http://bit.ly/mission-kids).*



## ***Part I: Overview***

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Revelation's prophecies reveal what is coming, so that God's people can be prepared for it. In his letter to the church at Thessaloniki, the apostle Paul clearly states the purpose of prophecy: "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober" (*1 Thess. 5:4–6, NKJV*). God's Word provides light on the road ahead. In this week's lesson, we will study Revelation's predictions of the final movements of this earth's history.

Understanding what is coming will help us prepare for the final conflict between the forces of good and evil. Revelation 18 predicts that a confederation of religious, political, and economic powers, called Babylon, will unite in an attempt to rule the world. But God is never caught by surprise. According to Revelation 18:1, 2, God will move through His Holy Spirit to lighten the world with His glory. Demonic powers from beneath will be met by heaven's power from above. Then it will be demonstrated through God's people that the glory of God is His character.

The focus of our study this week is on God's glory, revealed through His people to lighten this sin-darkened world. Changed by grace, transformed by love, filled with the Holy Spirit, God's last-day church gives His final appeal to this world, and tens of thousands hear and respond to the call. Thus, "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (*Matt. 24:14, NKJV*).

## ***Part II: Commentary***

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### **The Glory of God**

Revelation 18:1 is one of the most significant passages in the entire book of Revelation. It reads, "After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory" (*NKJV*). The expression "the earth was illuminated with [God's] glory" is extremely significant. Throughout Revelation there are three words that are linked together—"God's glory, God's honor, and God's power."

Revelation 4:11 states, " 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power' " (*NKJV*). Consider Revelation 5:12, where John once again says that Jesus is worthy to receive, among other things, glory, honor,

and power. We discover this thought again in Revelation 19:1: “ ‘Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!’ ” (*NKJV*). And notice how Revelation, referring to the habitation of the New Jerusalem by the saints, closes: “And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it” (*Rev. 21:26, NKJV*).

The great controversy between good and evil in the universe is about God’s honor and reputation. Satan, a rebel angel, has declared that God is unjust—that He demands worship but gives little in return. The evil one declares that God’s law is arbitrary and restricts our freedom and limits our joy.

Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection exploded that myth. The One who created us plunged into this snake pit of a world to redeem us. On the cross, Jesus answered Satan’s charges and demonstrated that God is both loving and just. Charmed by His love, concerned about His honor, His end-time people reveal His glory—His loving, self-sacrificing character—to a self-centered, godless world. Thus, the earth will be illuminated by a revelation of the character of God.

### **The Fullness of the Spirit**

The Holy Spirit will be poured out in the fullness of His power just before the coming of Jesus, and the earth will be lightened with the glory of God. Revelation 18:1 is a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophet Habakkuk’s words: “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (*Hab. 2:14, NKJV*). As we just commented, the glory of God is His character of love. But this assertion begs a question: How will this glory be revealed in the last moments of history on a morally darkened, sin-polluted planet?

To answer this question, let us consider an experience of Moses. Remember when Moses asked God to show him His glory? What did God reveal? Let’s read God’s answer to Moses’ question: “And he said, ‘Please, show me Your glory.’ Then He said, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion’ ” (*Exod. 33:18, 19, NKJV*). God’s glory is His character.

The glory of God fills the earth at a time of spiritual darkness, as His people—overwhelmed with His love, transformed by His grace, and committed to His mission—reveal to the world His loving character in their lives and witness. The witness of their unselfish lives and the proclamation of the message of His goodness, grace, and truth is in stark contrast to the selfishness, pride, and falsehoods of this world’s system.

### God's Final Appeal

An angel descends from heaven with a message directly from the throne of God, a message that calls His people out of an apostate religiopolitical confederacy named Babylon. God's warning is that " 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons' " (*Rev. 18:2, NKJV*). This proclamation mirrors that of the second angel of Revelation 14 who also announced the fall of Babylon (*Rev. 14:8*). Revelation 18:4 is God's last call to all humanity. He urgently appeals to those called by His name: " 'Come out of her [Babylon], my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues' " (*NKJV*). "Sin is the transgression of [God's] law" (*1 John 3:4*). God is calling His people to come out of every lawbreaking church. Why is God calling His people out of Babylon at this point? Revelation 18:5 tells us: " 'For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities' " (*NKJV*). Babylon has filled the cup of her iniquity. God keeps an accurate record of the sins of earthly powers, and when the figures reach a certain amount, God says, "Enough!"

That's exactly what happened in the days of Noah. God sent a message of redemption to the antediluvian world, but when their sins reached a certain amount, and after every person on earth had had a chance to repent, the rains came. We see the same thing again in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot made a solemn appeal to his children to leave Sodom with him. When the tally of sin reached a certain amount, the fire fell.

The same thing happened with ancient Babylon. God sent message after message to Babylon, calling its leaders and people to repentance, but when those messages were rejected, the Medes and Persians invaded. God's mercy bears long with His wayward children. He gives them every chance to repent. He sends His Spirit to individual hearts. He sends prophetic warnings and makes urgent appeals, but He gives to all the freedom of choice. Spiritual Babylon, as did its ancient counterpart, hardens its heart in rebellion.

Demonic forces will eventually take total control of modern, spiritual Babylon. She becomes "a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit" (*Rev. 18:2, NKJV*). God's people are filled with the Holy Spirit, and, by contrast, the spirits of demons fill Babylon. When any individual or religious organization knowingly turns from the teachings of Scripture, they become open to spiritual delusions. The only way to avoid being controlled by unholy spirits is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Babylon's deceptions become universal, for all nations will drink the wine of her fornications. Wine represents false doctrines, as we saw in a previous study. Those who drink the wine of Babylon become confused in their thinking. They mistake error for truth and conclude that

truth is error. Carefully notice the wording in Revelation 18:3: “ ‘For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury’ ” (*NKJV*).

Fornication is an illicit union. There are three groups who unite in this illicit union, or end-time confederacy: Babylon (all false religions of the world, including spiritualism, in league with the papal power), the kings of the earth (political/state powers), and the merchants of the earth (economic forces). Speaking about the union of church and state that is coming, Ellen G. White warns us that “when Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 451. God will meet the “marvelous working of Satan” with the greatest manifestation of heaven’s power since Pentecost: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. The earth will be ablaze with the glory of God. The gospel will be preached to the ends of the earth by people who will be living witnesses of its transforming power. Tens of thousands of honest-hearted men and women will flee Babylon and unite with Christ’s followers. Then Jesus will stream down the corridor of the skies in glory and take His children home.

### ***Part III: Life Application***

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**Reflect:** The two most important things in life are knowing Jesus and helping others to know Him. Stated another way, the two most important things in life are being ready for the coming of Jesus and helping others to be ready when He comes. The closer we draw to Christ, the more we reveal His glory to the world. As John writes: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace” (*John 1:14, 16, NKJV*). To reflect God’s glory is to be filled with Christ’s love, grace, and power. It is to live for the glory of His name and the honor of His kingdom.

Hymn 322, “Nothing Between,” expresses the longing of every converted heart: “Nothing between my soul and the Savior, naught of this world’s delusive dream: I have renounced all sinful pleasure—Jesus is mine! There’s nothing between.”—*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1985).

Ask class members to reflect in the coming week on the questions below:

- 1. Is there anything that I would rather have than Jesus? If so, what is this “idol”? What occupies my time? How do I spend my leisure moments? What consumes my inmost thoughts?**

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- 2. In what ways does my life reflect my outward profession of faith? How do my actions testify to my spiritual commitment?**

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- 3. If Jesus came today, would I be ready? If not, why not?**

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- 4. Does Christ have complete control of my life? If He doesn't, what is standing in the way, and what can I, with the Holy Spirit's help, do about it?**

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Years after the exciting start of the Christian church in Ephesus, the members there begin to struggle with their faith.

As Paul writes his letter to the Ephesians from prison, he is worried that they may forget what it means to be Jesus' disciples in their pagan culture. Paul seeks to reignite the fire of their devotion to Christ and to resurrect the excitement of being part of God's church.

Ephesians, our study for this quarter written by John K. McVay, speaks especially to times like our own, in which the allure of the world and the passing of time threaten to dull Christian discipleship. It lifts up Christ and accents the significance of following Him as engaged, active members of His church as we live out the hope of His return. This quarter we have the privilege of prayerfully studying Ephesians and experiencing anew the excitement of following Jesus in challenging times.

## Lesson 1—Paul and the Ephesians

### The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: **Paul, Evangelist to Ephesus** (*Acts 18:18–21*)

MONDAY: **A Riot in the Amphitheater** (*Acts 19:21–20:1*)

TUESDAY: **Hearing the Letter to the Ephesians** (*Eph. 1:1–6:24*)

WEDNESDAY: **Ephesians in Its Time** (*Eph. 1:1, 2*)

THURSDAY: **Ephesians: A Christ-Saturated Letter** (*Eph. 1:9, 10*)

**Memory Text**—*Ephesians 1:9, 10, ESV*

**Sabbath Gem:** Paul writes his letter to the Ephesians at a time when they are tempted to lose heart. His purpose is to awaken them to their full identity and privileges as followers of Christ.

## Lesson 2—God's Grand, Christ-Centered Plan

### The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: **Chosen and Accepted in Christ** (*Eph. 1:3–6*)

MONDAY: **Costly Redemption; Lavish Forgiveness** (*Eph. 1:7, 8*)

TUESDAY: **God's Grand, Christ-Centered Plan** (*Eph. 1:9, 10, ESV*)

WEDNESDAY: **Living in Praise of His Glory** (*Eph. 1:11, 12*)

THURSDAY: **The Holy Spirit: Seal and Down Payment** (*Eph. 1:13, 14*)

**Memory Text**—*Ephesians 1:3, ESV*

**Sabbath Gem:** Paul begins Ephesians by praising God for all the blessings He has poured out and for working through the ages on behalf of believers.

**Lessons for People Who Are Legally Blind** The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is available free in braille, on audio CD, and via online download to people who are legally blind or physically disabled. This includes individuals who, because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accident, and so forth, cannot hold or focus on normal ink-print publications. Contact Christian Record Services for the Blind, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506-0097. Phone: 402-488-0981; email: [info@christianrecord.org](mailto:info@christianrecord.org); website: [www.christianrecord.org](http://www.christianrecord.org).