

Wait on the Lord



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Ps. 27:14, Rom. 8:18–25, Psalm 131, Matt. 18:3, Psalm 126, Psalm 92, Mark 16:1–8, 2 Pet. 1:19.*

Memory Text: “Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!” (*Psalm 27:14, NKJV*).

We have reached the last week in this quarter's study of the Psalms. The spiritual journey has taken us through the experience of awe before the majestic Creator, King, and Judge; through the joys of divine deliverance, forgiveness, and salvation; through moments of surrender in grief and lament; and through the glorious promises of God's everlasting presence and the anticipation of the unending universal worship of God. The journey continues, though, as we live in the hope of the Lord's coming when our longing for God will find its ultimate fulfillment. If there is a final word that we can draw from the Psalms, it should be “wait on the Lord.”

Waiting on the Lord is not an idle and desperate biding of one's time. Instead, waiting on the Lord is an act full of trust and faith, a trust and faith revealed in action. Waiting on the Lord transforms our gloomy evenings with the expectancy of the bright morning (*Ps. 30:5, Ps. 143:8*). It strengthens our hearts with renewed hope and peace. It motivates us to work harder, bringing in the sheaves of plentiful harvest from the Lord's mission fields (*Ps. 126:6, Matt. 9:36–38*). Waiting on the Lord will never put us to shame but will be richly rewarded because the Lord is faithful to all His promises (*Ps. 37:7–11, 18, 34; Ps. 71:1; Ps. 119:137, 138*).

* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, March 30.

The Call of Waiting

Read Psalm 27:14; Psalm 37:7, 9, 34; Psalm 39:7; Psalm 40:1; Psalm 69:6; Galatians 5:5; and Romans 8:18–25. What do these texts implore God’s people to do?

Perhaps one of the greatest stresses in life is the stress of waiting. No matter who we are, where we live, what our station in life is, we all at times must wait for things. From waiting in line in a store to waiting to hear a medical prognosis, we wait—which we don’t always like doing, do we?

What, then, about waiting for God? The notion of waiting on the Lord is found not only in the Psalms but abounds all through the Bible. The operative word in all this is *perseverance*. Perseverance is our supreme commitment of refusing to succumb to fear of disappointment that somehow God will not come through for us. God’s devoted child waits, knowing with certainty that God is faithful and those who wait on Him can trust that if we leave our situation to Him, we can be sure that He will work it out for our best, even if at the time we don’t necessarily see it that way.

Waiting on the Lord is more than just hanging on. It is a deep longing for God that is compared to intense thirst in a dry land (*Ps. 63:1*). The psalmist waits on many blessings from God, but his yearning to be brought close to his God surpasses any other desire and need in life.

As we read in Paul, in this amazing passage in Romans, God and the whole creation are waiting for the renewal of the world and the blessed meeting of God and His people at the end of time. He writes: “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God” (*Rom. 8:19, NKJV*).

What an incredible promise!

Yet, while we are waiting for the ultimate salvation and reunion with God, even as “the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs” (*Rom. 8:22, NKJV*), the Lord still abides with His people now, through the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile, we are called to bear witness (*Acts 1:4–8*) to the plan of salvation, which will culminate in a new creation. That new creation is, ultimately, what we are waiting for, the final fulfillment of our hopes as Adventist Christians, whose very name, Adventist, contains the idea of the hope that we await. We wait, but we know that it’s not in vain. Christ’s death and resurrection, at the first coming, is our surety of His second coming.

What are some things you are waiting for now from God? How do we learn to wait in faith and in trust, especially when what we are praying for hasn’t yet come?

Peace of a Weaned Child

Read Psalm 131. What does this psalm teach us about our relationship with God?

God's people live in a world that afflicts the faithful, a world full of temptations and hardship for almost everyone. A refreshed conviction that he is a child of God and dependent on God for his life consoles the psalmist and brings him to confess that his pride has no value. The deceitfulness of pride is that it causes the proud to become self-centered and unable to look beyond themselves. The proud are thus blinded to the higher reality of God.

In contrast, the righteous lift their eyes to God (*Ps. 123:1, 2*). The acknowledgment of God's greatness makes them humble and free from self-seeking and vain ambition. The psalmist confesses that he does not seek "great matters" and "things too high" (*Ps. 131:1*). These expressions describe God's works in the world that are beyond human comprehension. Modern science has shown us that even the "simplest" things can be incredibly complicated and far beyond our understanding, at least for now. In fact, there's a great irony: the more we learn about the physical world, the greater the mysteries that appear before us.

Meanwhile, the metaphor in Psalm 131:2, "like a weaned child with [its] mother" (*NKJV*), is a powerful image of one who finds calmness and who is quieted in the embrace of God. It points to the loving relationship a child has with its mother at various stages in that child's young life.

Through weaning us from insubstantial ambitions and pride, God introduces us to the nourishment of solid food, which is to "do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (*John 4:34, also Heb. 5:12-14*). The childlike trust depicted in Psalm 131 is mature faith that has been tried and tested by the hardships of life and has found God to be faithful and true to His Word.

The psalmist's attention at the end rests on the well-being of God's people. Ultimately, we are called to use our experience with God to strengthen His church. That is, from what we have learned, personally, of God's faithfulness and goodness, we can share with others who, for whatever reason, still struggle with their faith. Our witness about Christ can even be within the church itself, where many need to know Him for themselves.

“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (*Matt. 18:3, NKJV*). What is Jesus saying to us here? What does this idea entail?

Bringing in the Sheaves

Read Psalm 126. What gives strength and hope to God's people? What is being said here, in this context, that we can apply to our own lives today?

The Lord's miraculous deliverances in the past are an inexhaustible source of inspiration for God's people and their source of hope for the future. The past deliverance was so great that it could be described as a dream-come-true experience (*Isa. 29:7, 8*). Notice that the generation that praises the Lord in Psalm 126 for His past deliverance of His people from captivity (*Ps. 126:1*) is presently in captivity (*Ps. 126:4*).

Yet, the past joy and relief are relived through songs and appropriated in present experience. The new generations keep biblical history alive by counting themselves as present among those who saw the events firsthand. Thus, a living faith cherishes God's great deeds for His people in the past as something that the Lord has done for us and not simply things that the Lord did only for *them* (the past generations of believers).

In fact, the memory of the past spurs renewed hope for the present. The image of "the streams in the south" (*Ps. 126:4*) is a powerful metaphor of God's acting suddenly and powerfully on behalf of His people. The very south of Judah was an arid desert region. The streams were formed suddenly and filled with rushing waters after heavy rainfalls during the rainy season. The early and late rains played a crucial role in the success of the agricultural year (*Deut. 11:14, Deut. 28:12*). Similarly, the image of sowing in tears and reaping in joy (*Ps. 126:5, 6*) is a powerful promise of divine leading from a difficult present to a happy future.

The end of the harvest season was the time when the ancient Hebrew pilgrimages brought the fruits of the season to God's temple in Jerusalem (*Exod. 34:22, 26*). The harvest motif provided a potent spiritual lesson to the people at that time. Just as the hard labor of sowing and caring for the fields, orchards, and vineyards is rewarded with the joy of a plentiful harvest, so the present trials of God's people will be crowned with the joy of salvation at the end of time. The image of the great harvest points to God's restoration of His kingdom on earth at Christ's second coming (*Amos 9:13–15, Matt. 9:37*). Here, too, however, the theme of waiting arises. As with the harvest, we must wait to see the fruit and results of our labor.

Dwell on some times when you clearly and unmistakably saw the Lord working in your life or in the lives of others. How can you draw hope from those experiences for whatever you might be going through now?

Waiting in God's Sabbath Rest

Read Psalm 92. What two aspects of the Sabbath day are highlighted in this song for the Sabbath day?

The praise of God for the great works of His hands (*Ps. 92:4, 5*) and the Eden-like portrayal of the righteous (*Ps. 92:12–14*) clearly point to Creation, the first aspect that the Sabbath commemorates. The psalm also magnifies the Lord for His victory over enemies as the God of justice (*Ps. 92:7–15*) and so reinforces the second Sabbath theme—redemption from evil (*Deut. 5:12–15*). Thus, Psalm 92 extols God for His past Creation and present sustaining of the world, and it points to the end-time hope in eternal divine peace and order.

The people can enjoy Sabbath rest because God is the “Most High” (*Ps. 92:1, NKJV*); His superior position on the high places gives Him an unparalleled advantage over their enemies.

Yet, although He is the Most High, the Lord readily reaches down to rescue those who call on Him. The Lord's work of creation and especially redemption of that creation should inspire people to worship God and love Him. After all, living in a fallen creation, without the hope of redemption, isn't anything to be particularly thrilled about. We love, we suffer, we die—and do so without any hope. Hence, we praise the Lord, not only as our Creator but as our Redeemer, as well.

“Fresh oil” conveys the psalmist's renewed devotion to serve God as His reconsecrated servant (*Ps. 92:10*). The anointing with oil was done for consecration of chosen people such as priests and kings (*Exod. 40:15, 1 Sam. 10:1*). Yet, the psalmist chose an unusual Hebrew word, *balal*, to describe his anointing that does not typically depict anointing of God's servants but denotes “mixing” of oil with other parts of the sacrifice (*Exod. 29:2, NKJV; Lev. 2:4, 5*). The psalmist's unique use of *balal* implies that the psalmist wishes to present himself as a living sacrifice to the Lord and to consecrate his whole self to God (*Rom. 12:1*).

It is not surprising to find thoughts about consecration in a psalm that is dedicated to the Sabbath because the Sabbath is the sign that the Lord sanctifies His people (*Exod. 31:13*). The images of palm trees and cedars of Lebanon portray God's people growing in faith and true appreciation of God's wonderful purposes and love. The Sabbath is the sign of the Lord's eternal covenant with His people (*Ezek. 20:20*). Thus, the Sabbath rest is essential to God's people because it empowers them to trustingly wait upon the Lord to fulfill all His covenantal promises (*Heb. 4:1–10*).

Read through Psalm 92 again. What great hope is offered to us there, and how can we, even right now, take comfort in what it says?

Joy Comes in the Morning

Read Psalm 5:3, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 49:14, Psalm 59:16, Psalm 92:2, Psalm 119:147, 2 Peter 1:19, and Revelation 22:16. What time of day is symbolically portrayed as the time of divine redemption and why?

In the Psalms, morning is typically the time when God's redemption is anticipated. Morning reveals God's favor, which ends the long night of despair and trouble (*Ps. 130:5, 6*). In Psalm 143, God's deliverance will reverse the present darkness of death (*Ps. 143:3*) into the light of a new morning (*Ps. 143:8*), and from being in the pit (*Ps. 143:7*) into residing in "the land of uprightness" (*Ps. 143:10*).

Read Mark 16:1–8. What happened in the morning talked about here, and why is that so important to us?

The resurrection morning of Jesus Christ opened the way for the eternal morning of God's salvation for all who believe in His name. Jesus' disciples experienced the full strength of the promise in Psalm 30:5: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," when they met the resurrected Lord. It is only by God's favor and unconditional love that our weeping is transformed to joy (*Ps. 30:5, 7*).

As the morning star announces the birth of a new day, so faith heralds the new reality of eternal life in God's children (*2 Pet. 1:19*). Jesus is called the bright and morning star (*Rev. 22:16*), whom we eagerly await to establish His kingdom in which there will be no more night, evil, and death (*Rev. 21:1–8, 25*). In the end, more than anything else, this is what we are waiting for when we talk about waiting on the Lord. And, surely, the wait is worth it.

"Over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Christ had proclaimed in triumph, 'I am the resurrection, and the life.' These words could be spoken only by the Deity. All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of God. From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life. Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 785.

Death, it has been said, has been etched in our cells at birth. Though true, at least for us fallen beings, what has the resurrection of Jesus promised us about the temporality of death? Why must we never forget just how temporal death is for us?

Further Thought: Read Ellen G. White, “Growing Up Into Christ,” pp. 67–75, in *Steps to Christ*.

The Psalms utter fervent appeals to wait on the Lord. “Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him” (*Ps. 37:7, NKJV*). When waiting strikes us as burdensome, uncertain, and lonely, we should remember the disciples on the day of Jesus’ ascension to heaven (*Acts 1:4–11*). Jesus was taken up to heaven before their eyes, while they were left behind to wait for Him to come back on some unknown future day. Who has ever experienced a more intense yearning to receive God’s blessing now than the disciples on that day? They surely longed, “Lord, take us with You now.” Yet, they were instructed to wait for the promise of the Father and for Jesus’ return. If we think that the disciples were filled with despair and disappointment, we will be surprised. They returned to Jerusalem and did exactly what Jesus told them—they waited for the gift of the Holy Spirit and then preached the gospel to the world with power (*Acts 1:12–14, Acts 2*).

Our Lord’s commandment to wait on Him is an impossible one unless He has done His work in us through the Holy Spirit. No amount of human enthusiasm will ever stand up to the strain that waiting will impose upon our frail self. Only one thing will bear the strain, and that is abiding in Jesus Christ, namely, a personal relationship with Him. “Then if Christ is dwelling in our hearts, He will work in us ‘both to will and to do of His good pleasure.’ *Philippians 2:13*. We shall work as He worked; we shall manifest the same spirit. And thus, loving Him and abiding in Him, we shall ‘grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.’ *Ephesians 4:15*.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 75. As we continue to wait on the Lord, we will find peace and contentment in the Psalms. Our prayers and songs are where God’s heart and our hearts meet daily.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 Why is waiting significant in our spiritual life? Discuss the experiences of waiting of some biblical heroes of faith. How did waiting purify and strengthen their faith? (*Rom. 4:19–22, Hebrews 11*).
- 2 What is the end of our waiting? (*Ps. 37:34–40*). That is, what are we promised when all things are, finally, resolved? What hope do we find in these texts, for instance, about the justice that has so long been missing in this life?
- 3 Why, as far as the dead are concerned, and as far as their own experience goes (*Eccles. 9:5*), is their waiting for Jesus almost done? What hope can we take from the answer?

Waldensians in Poland

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Ryszard Jankowski couldn't get the police to leave him alone. Every time he set up a stand to sell Ellen White's *The Great Controversy* and other books in a Baltic resort town in Poland, the police showed up and demanded that he remove the stand and the books.

Then the Polish Seventh-day Adventist publishing house released a special issue of the *Signs of the Times* magazine, and church leaders sent copies to members of the Polish government. One government minister liked the issue so much that he wrote a letter asking towns across Poland to support its distribution. Ryszard took the letter and a copy of the magazine to the mayor of the resort town where he had trouble with the police.

The mayor was impressed. He knew the government minister.

"He was my university professor," he said. "Of course, you can freely distribute this magazine here."

"Can I get your permission in writing?" Ryszard asked.

The mayor wrote a letter and gave it to Ryszard.

Ryszard took the letter and again set up his book stand on the street. He placed the *Signs of the Times* magazine on the stand together with *The Great Controversy* and other books. Before long, the police appeared.

"You can't sell your books in our city," a police officer said.

"Look, I have a letter from the mayor," Ryszard said.

The police officers read the letter carefully. Then they saluted.

"OK, you can stay," one said.

But that wasn't the end of the story. Shortly afterward, a grandmother stopped by the book stand. Someone had given her *The Great Controversy* some time earlier, and she had read it to her grandson. He had liked it very much, especially the portrayal of Waldensian young people clandestinely sharing the Word of God at the risk of their lives in the Middle Ages. The grandmother told Ryszard that her grandson wanted to be like the Waldensians. Her grandson understood that he needed to be like them—faithful to the Word of God at all costs.

"He saw your stand and your book *The Great Controversy*," she said. "He said to me, 'Grandma, the Waldensians are in our town.'"

So, the grandmother sought out Ryszard to tell him about her grandson. She later joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2017 that helped build a television studio for Hope Channel Poland. Ryszard Jankowski is the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Poland and a regular speaker on Hope Channel Poland, the local affiliate of Hope Channel International.

Join the global church in the mass promotion and distribution of The Great Controversy in 2023 and 2024. Visit greatcontroversyproject.org for details or ask your pastor.

28 FUNDAMENTAL Beliefs

OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH



Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Below is an abbreviated version for your reference. A complete version can be found at www.Adventist.org/beliefs.

1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will. (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.)

2. THE TRINITY

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. God, who is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2.)

3. THE FATHER

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 4:35; Ps. 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:28; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 4:11.)

4. THE SON

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. (Isa. 53:4-6; Dan. 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17-19; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 2:9-18; 8:1, 2.)

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He is as much a person as are the Father and the Son. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. (Gen. 1:1, 2; 2 Sam. 23:2; Ps. 51:11; Isa. 61:1; Luke 1:35; 4:18; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 5:3; 10:38; Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Peter 1:21.)

6. CREATION

God has revealed in Scripture the authentic and historical account of His creative activity. He created the universe, and in a recent and literal six-day creation the Lord made “the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them” and rested on the seventh day. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of the work He performed. (Gen. 1-2; 5; 11; Exod. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Isa. 45:12, 18; Acts 17:24; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; 11:3; Rev. 10:6; 14:7.)

7. THE NATURE OF HUMANITY

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7, 15; 3; Ps. 8:4-8; 51:5, 10; 58:3; Jer. 17:9; Acts 17:24-28; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Eph. 2:3; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 3:4; 4:7, 8, 11, 20.)

8. THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God’s adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. (Gen. 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-18; Rom. 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Rev. 12:4-9.)

9. THE LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

In Christ’s life of perfect obedience to God’s will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22:1; Isa. 53; John 3:16; 14:30; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 2:15; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.)

10. THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord, Substitute and Example. (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 45:22; 53; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 33:11; 36:25-27; Hab. 2:4; Mark 9:23, 24; John 3:3-8, 16; 16:8; Rom. 3:21-26; 8:1-4, 14-17; 5:6-10; 10:17; 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Gal. 1:4; 3:13, 14, 26; 4:4-7; Eph. 2:4-10; Col. 1:13, 14; Titus 3:3-7; Heb. 8:7-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:21, 22; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rev. 13:8.)

11. GROWING IN CHRIST

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus’ victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. (1 Chron. 29:11; Ps. 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Matt. 20:25-28; 25:31-46; Luke 10:17-20; John 20:21; Rom. 8:38, 39; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; Gal. 5:22-25; Eph. 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; Phil. 3:7-14; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; 1 Thess. 5:16-18, 23; Heb. 10:25; James 1:27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 1 John 4:4.)

12. THE CHURCH

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to humanity, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. (Gen. 12:1-3; Exod. 19:3-7; Matt. 16:13-20; 18:18; 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38-42; 7:38; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11; 5:23-27; Col. 1:17, 18; 1 Peter 2:9)

13. THE REMNANT AND ITS MISSION

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. (Dan. 7:9-14; Isa. 1:9; 11:11; Jer. 23:3; Mic. 2:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.)

14. UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. (Ps. 133:1; Matt. 28:19, 20; John 17:20-23; Acts 17:26, 27; Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Gal. 3:27-29; Eph. 2:13-16; 4:3-6, 11-16; Col. 3:10-15.)

15. BAPTISM

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38; 16:30-33; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-6; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12, 13.)

16. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. The communion service is open to all believing Christians. (Matt. 26:17-30; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Rev. 3:20.)

17. SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND MINISTRIES

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts that each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. (Acts 6:1-7; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

18. THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church, and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and . . . make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Num. 12:6; 2 Chron. 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.)

19. THE LAW OF GOD

The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard in God's judgment. (Exod. 20:1-17; Deut. 28:1-14; Ps. 19:7-14; 40:7, 8; Matt. 5:17-20; 22:36-40; John 14:15; 15:7-10; Rom. 8:3, 4; Eph. 2:8-10; Heb. 8:8-10; 1 John 2:3; 5:3; Rev. 12:17; 14:12.)

20. THE SABBATH

The gracious Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. (Gen. 2:1-3; Exod. 20:8-11; 31:13-17; Lev. 23:32; Deut. 5:12-15; Isa. 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Ezek. 20:12, 20; Matt. 12:1-12; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:16; Heb. 4:1-11.)

21. STEWARDSHIP

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow human beings, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; Rom. 15:26, 27; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; 9:7.)

22. CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with biblical principles in all aspects of personal and social life. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things that will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. (Gen. 7:2; Exod. 20:15; Lev. 11:1-47; Ps. 106:3; Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 10:5; Eph. 5:1-21; Phil. 2:4; 4:8; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10; Titus 2:11, 12; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 John 2:6; 3 John 2.)

23. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between a man and a woman who share a common faith. (Gen. 2:18-25; Exod. 20:12; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:3-9, 12; Mark 10:11, 12; John 2:1-11; 1 Cor. 7:7, 10, 11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4.)

24. CHRIST'S MINISTRY IN THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle that the Lord set up and not humans. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. At His ascension, He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary. (Lev. 16; Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Heb. 1:3; 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; Rev. 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:11, 12.)

25. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-6; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; Rev. 1:7; 14:14-20; 19:11-21.)

26. DEATH AND RESURRECTION

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 146:3, 4; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; Dan. 12:2, 13; Isa. 25:8; John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14; Rom. 6:23; 16; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 20:1-10.)

27. THE MILLENNIUM AND THE END OF SIN

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close, Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Jer. 4:23-26; Ezek. 28:18, 19; Mal. 4:1; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Rev. 20; 21:1-5.)

28. THE NEW EARTH

On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 11:15; 21:1-7; 22:1-5.)