Lesson 4, 4th Quarter October 19-25, 2024 Themes in the Gospel of Iohn Sabbath Afternoon, October 19 **Memory Text:** "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." KJV — John 3:3 "These disciples had been for some time associated with Jesus in active labor. John and James, Andrew and Peter, with Philip, Nathanael, and Matthew, had been more closely connected with Him than the others, and had witnessed more of His miracles. Peter, James, and John stood in still nearer relationship to Him. They were almost constantly with Him, witnessing His miracles, and hearing His words. John pressed into still closer intimacy with Jesus, so that he is distinguished as the one whom Jesus loved. The Saviour loved them all, but John's was the most receptive spirit. He was younger than the others, and with more of the child's confiding trust he opened his heart to Jesus. Thus he came more into sympathy with Christ, and through him the Saviour's deepest spiritual teaching was communicated to His people." DA 292.1

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Witnesses of Christ as the Messiah

Sunday, October 20

The Testimony of John the Baptist Read John 1:19–23. How did John the Baptist explain his ministry and mission?

"On one occasion the Jewish rulers sent messengers to John the Baptist to make the inquiry, "Who art thou?" John "confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." RH November 28, 1907, par. 1 "Had the minds of his hearers been keen to recognize spiritual truth, they would have discerned

the significance of John's words. Allusion was made to a custom prevailing in those Eastern countries. When a monarch was about to make a journey, men were sent before him to clear obstructions from the way, that the king might travel in safety and without hindrance. 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness,' John declared, 'Make straight the way of the Lord."' RH November 28, 1907, par. 2 Read Isaiah 40:1–5 and John 1:23. How does John use these verses? "In the later centuries of Israel's history prior to the first advent it was generally understood that the coming of the Messiah was referred to in the prophecy, "It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of

the earth." "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed," the prophet had foretold, "and all flesh shall

see it together." Isaiah 49:6; 40:5. It was of this light of men that John the Baptist afterward

testified so boldly, when he proclaimed, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." John 1:23." PK 688.4

Monday, October 21 The Lamb of God Read John 1:29-37. What proclamation does John the Baptist make about Jesus? What image does he use to depict Him, and why is it so significant in understanding who Jesus was and what His mission would be?

"When at the baptism of Jesus, John pointed to Him as the Lamb of God, a new light was shed upon the Messiah's work. The prophet's mind was directed to the words of Isaiah, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." Isaiah 53:7. During the weeks that followed, John with new interest studied the prophecies and the teaching of the sacrificial service. He did not distinguish clearly the two phases of Christ's work,—as a suffering sacrifice and a conquering king,—but he saw that His coming had a deeper significance than priests or people had discerned. When he beheld Jesus among the throng on His return from the desert, he confidently looked for Him to

give the people some sign of His true character. Almost impatiently he waited to hear the Saviour declare His mission; but no word was spoken, no sign given. Jesus did not respond to the Baptist's announcement of Him, but mingled with the disciples of John, giving no outward evidence of His special work, and taking no measures to bring Himself to notice." DA 136.4 Read Mark 10:45, Romans 5:6, and 1 Peter 2:24. How do these verses help us understand the role of Jesus as "the Lamb of God"? Those who were servants were advised to remain subject to their masters "with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy," the apostle explained, "if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He

suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." AA 522.3

Tuesday, October 22 The Two Disciples of John

Read John 1:35–39. What did these two disciples do after hearing John's witness about Jesus? "Again, the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, behold the Lamb of God!" And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? The disciples confessed that they were seeking Christ, and that they desired to become acquainted with him, and to be instructed by him at his home. These two disciples were charmed with the deeply impressive, yet simple and practical, lessons of Christ. Their hearts had never been so moved before. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these disciples. He was interested for his friends and relatives, and was anxious that they also should see Christ, and hear for themselves his precious lessons. Andrew went in search of his brother Simon, and with assurance claimed to have found Christ, the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. He brought his brother to Jesus, and as soon as Jesus looked upon him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a stone. The next day Christ selected another disciple, Philip, and bade him follow him. Philip fully believed that Christ was the Messiah, and began to search for others to bring them to listen to the teachings of Christ, which had so charmed him. Then Philip found Nathanael. He was one of the number who heard John proclaim, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He felt deeply convicted, and retired to a grove, concealed from every human eye, and there meditated upon the announcement of John, calling to his mind the prophecies relating to the coming of the Messiah and his mission. He queried thus: Could this indeed be the Messiah for whom they had so long waited, and were so desirous to see? Hope sprang up in the heart of Nathanael that this might be the one that would save Israel. He bowed before God and prayed that if the person whom John had declared to be the Redeemer of the world was indeed the promised deliverer, that it might be made known to him. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon Nathanael in such a special manner that he was convinced that Christ was the Messiah. While Nathanael was praying, he heard the voice of Philip calling him, saying, 'We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him,

Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." 2SP 63.2 Wednesday, October 23 **Phillip and Nathaniel** Read John 1:43–46. What did Philip's message reveal about his faith in Jesus already? "When Philip had found Jesus, he was not content to keep the knowledge of the Messiah to himself. "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see." This is the best way to test the truth. With softened and subdued hearts, with the Holy Spirit resting upon you, come to the oracles of truth; see for yourselves what is truth. We do not ask you to believe because we present truth to you, but believe because you have proved for yourself that it is truth." RH April 21, 1891, par. 1 John 1:47–51. How did Jesus convince Nathaniel of who He was, and what was Nathaniel's response? How easily was Nathanael convinced! And with what pleasure Jesus looked upon his sincere, guileless faith! "Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." God never honors unbelief and questioning and doubt. When He speaks, His word is to be recognized and carried out in the daily actions. And if the heart of man is in living connection with God, the voice that cometh from above will be recognized." CSW 26.2 "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" In surprise Nathanael exclaimed, "Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." DA 140.3 "It was enough. The divine Spirit that had borne witness to Nathanael in his solitary prayer under the fig tree now spoke to him in the words of Jesus. Though in doubt, and yielding somewhat to prejudice, Nathanael had come to Christ with an honest desire for truth, and now his desire was met. His faith went beyond that of the one who had brought him to Jesus. He answered and said, 'Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." DA 140.4

Thursday, October 24 The Witnesses of Nicodemus Read John 3:1–21. How does the testimony of Nicodemus support the theme of the Gospel of John?

"In the presence of Christ, Nicodemus felt a strange timidity, which he endeavored to conceal under an air of composure and dignity. "Rabbi," he said, "we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." By speaking of Christ's rare gifts as a teacher, and also of His wonderful power to perform miracles, he hoped to pave the way for his interview. His words were designed to express and to invite confidence; but they really expressed unbelief. He did not acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah,

but only a teacher sent from God. DA 168.3 "Instead of recognizing this salutation, Jesus bent His eyes upon the speaker, as if reading his very soul. In His infinite wisdom He saw before Him a seeker after truth. He knew the object of this visit, and with a desire to deepen the conviction already resting upon His listener's mind, He came directly to the point, saying solemnly, yet kindly, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3, margin." DA 168.4

Read John 3:3–21. What did Jesus say to Nicodemus to show that He could see right through him?

Nicodemus had come to the Lord thinking to enter into a discussion with Him, but Jesus laid bare the foundation principles of truth. He said to Nicodemus, It is not theoretical knowledge have a new heart. You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things new, it will result in no saving good for

you need so much as spiritual regeneration. You need not to have your curiosity satisfied, but to you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission. DA 171.1 "Surprised out of his self-possession, he answered Christ in words full of irony, "How can a man be born when he is old?" Like many others when cutting truth is brought home to the

conscience, he revealed the fact that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. There is in him nothing that responds to spiritual things; for spiritual things are spiritually discerned. DA 171.4 "But the Saviour did not meet argument with argument. Raising His hand with solemn, quiet

God. He was convinced that he was in the presence of the One whom John the Baptist had

dignity, He pressed the truth home with greater assurance, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Nicodemus knew that Christ here referred to water baptism and the renewing of the heart by the Spirit of foretold." DA 171.5

Further Thought

Friday, October 25 "During these days that Christ spent with His disciples, they gained a new experience. As they heard their beloved Master explaining the Scriptures in the light of all that had happened, their faith in Him was fully established. They reached the place where they could say, "I know whom I have believed." 2 Timothy 1:12. They began to realize the nature and extent of their work, to see that they were to proclaim to the world the truths entrusted to them. The events of Christ's life, His death and resurrection, the prophecies pointing to these events, the mysteries of the plan of

salvation, the power of Jesus for the remission of sins—to all these things they had been

of peace and salvation through repentance and the power of the Saviour." AA 27.1

witnesses, and they were to make them known to the world. They were to proclaim the gospel

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