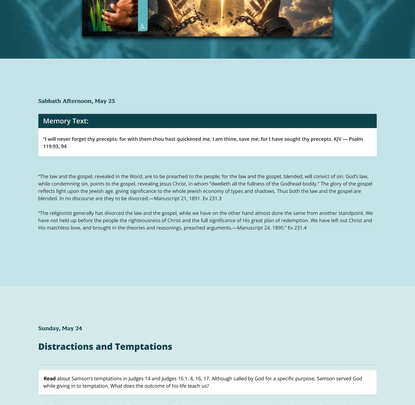
Sin, the Gospel, and the Law

Lesson 9, 2nd Quarter, Sabbath, May 23–May 29, 2026



Sabbath Afternoon, May 23

Memory Text:

"I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me. I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts. KJV — Psalm 119:93, 94

"The law and the gospel, revealed in the Word, are to be preached to the people; for the law and the gospel, blended, will convict of sin. God's law, while condemning sin, points to the gospel, revealing Jesus Christ, in whom "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The glory of the gospel reflects light upon the Jewish age, giving significance to the whole Jewish economy of types and shadows. Thus both the law and the gospel are blended. In no discourse are they to be divorced.—Manuscript 21, 1891, Ev. 231.3.

"The religionist generally has divorced the law and the gospel, while we have on the other hand almost done the same from another standpoint. We have not held up before the people the righteousness of Christ and the full significance of His great plan of redemption. We have left out Christ and His matchless love, and brought in the theories and reasonings, preached arguments.—Manuscript 24, 1890, Tr 231.4.

Sunday, May 24

Distractions and Temptations

Read about Samson's temptations in Judges 14 and Judges 16:1, 4, 16, 17. Although called by God for a specific purpose, Samson served God while giving in to temptation. What does the outcome of his life teach us?

"Had Samson been true to his divine calling, the purpose of God could have been accomplished in his mission and in his vocation. But he yielded to temptation and proved untrue to his trust, and his mission was fulfilled in defeat, bondage, and death. PP 567.2

"Physically, Samson was the strongest man upon the earth; but in self-control, integrity, and firmness, he was one of the weakest of men. Many mistake strong passions for a strong character, but the truth is that he who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. The real greatness of the man is measured by the power of the feelings that he controls, not by those that control him. PP 567.3

"God's providential care had been over Samson, that he might be prepared to accomplish the work which he was called to do. At the very outset of life he was surrounded with favorable conditions for physical strength, intellectual vigor, and moral purity. But under the influence of wicked associates he let go that hold upon God which is man's only safeguard, and he was swept away by the tide of evil. Those who in the way of duty are brought into trial may be sure that God will preserve them; but if men willfully place themselves under the power of temptation, they will fall, sooner or later. PP 568.1

"The very ones whom God purposes to use as His instruments for a special work, Satan employs his utmost power to lead astray. He attacks us at our weak points, working through defects in the character to gain control of the whole man; and he knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed. But none need be overcome. Man is not left alone to conquer the power of evil by his own feeble efforts. Help is at hand and will be given to every soul who really desires it. Angels of God, that ascend and descend the ladder which Jacob saw in vision, will help every soul who will, to climb even to the highest heaven." PP 568.2

Monday, May 25

Strongholds in my relationship with God

Jesus warned about what we should do when our hands, feet, and eyes cause us to sin. What was Jesus warning us about? Read Mark 9:42–48.

"There may be cherished by us certain wrong things that are seemingly as dear as a hand or a foot. These things are to be put away from us forever. Never are our peculiar, unsanctified ideas to be pressed upon others. ..." RC 283.4

"If anything stands in the way of our surrender to Christ, even though it be as dear to us as a hand or a foot or an eye, it will be to our interest to let it go, rather than to lose eternal life." 23LtMs, MS 47, 1908, par. 11

"Each one has a work of overcoming to do. If the objectionable trait of character is not overcome, Satan will take advantage of the defect, and thereby defile the whole man." ST December 24, 1894, par. 7

"Here Christ would teach us that the character-building needs close and careful attention. This is the work that judas' keen perception might have discerned if he had learned the lessons which Christ sought to teach him. His objectionable traits of character would then have disappeared, and he would have become meek and lowly of heart, like his Master. ST May 20, 1897, par. 9

"And this work is something that we as well as judas must do. Those who have hereditary tendencies to evil, those who are putting forth thorn branches to wound all with whom they come in contact, should see that the offending members are cut away. Painful as this work may be of separating the evil from our character, it must be done. Selfishness and covetousness, which is idolatry; the harsh and unkind spirit, that, manifested in word or deed, will wound and destroy souls, must be taken out of the life, or the entire man will become offensive to himself and to God. His hard-heartedness will cause him to neglect the very ones who need his help." ST May 20, 1897, par. 10

"This is the bread which came down from heaven, even the Word of God. And this Word, received and appropriated by the living agents, will produce that faith which works by love, and purifies the soul. It will cut away the hereditary tendencies to evil, and the wrong traits of character that have been strengthened by cultivation. However dearly we may prise these, it is better to separate them from our life practise now than to have their predominating power defiling and corrupting the whole man. And not only this, they destroy our influence for good, and, instead of being a savor of life unto life, we become a savor of death unto death." ST May 20, 1897, par. 12

Tuesday, May 26

The Law

"The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Romans 13:10. The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: "Thy law is the truth:" "all Thy commandments are righteousness." Psalm 119:142, 172. And the apostle Paul declares: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Romans 7:12. Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author. GC 467.1

"It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God, the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart. But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God's law. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Romans 8:7. But "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son;" that man might be reconciled to God. Through the merits of Christ he can be restored to harmony with his Maker. His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth, without which, says Jesus, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." GC 467.2

"The first step in reconciliation to God is the conviction of sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law." "By the law is the knowledge of sin." 1 John 3:4; Romans 3:20. In order to see his guilt, the sinner must test his character by God's great standard of righteousness. It is a mirror which shows the perfection of a righteous character and enables him to discern the defects in his own. GC 467.3

"The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. While it promises life to the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor. The gospel of Christ alone can free him from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed; and faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice. Thus he obtains "remission of sins that past" and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is a child of God, having received the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries: 'Abba, Father!" GC 467.4

Wednesday, May 27

The Law and the Gospel

In Matthew 5:17, 18, what did Jesus say about the law?

"It is the Creator of men, the Giver of the law, who declares that it is not His purpose to set aside its precepts. Everything in nature, from the mote in the sunbeam to the worlds on high, is under law. And upon obedience to these laws the order and harmony of the natural world depend. So there are great principles of righteousness to control the life of all intelligent beings, and upon conformity to these principles the well-being of the universe depends. Before this earth was called into being, God's law existed. Angels are governed by its principles, and in order for earth to be in harmony with heaven, man also must obey the divine statutes. To man in Eden Christ made known the precepts of the law "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:7. The mission of Christ on earth was not to destroy the law, but by His grace to bring man back to obedience to its precepts. MB 48.1

"The beloved disciple, who listened to the words of Jesus on the mount, writing long afterward under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks of the law as of perpetual obligation. He says that "sin is the transgression of the law" and that "whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law." 1 John 3:4. He makes it plain that the law to which he refers is "an old commandment which ye had from the beginning." 1 John 2:7. He is speaking of the law that existed at the creation and was reiterated upon Mount Sinai. MB 48.2

"Speaking of the law, Jesus said, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." He here used the word "fulfill" in the same sense as when He declared to John the Baptist His purpose to "fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15); that is, to fill up the measure of the law's requirement, to give an example of perfect conformity to the will of God. MB 48.3

"His mission was to "magnify the law, and make it honorable." Isaiah 42:21. He was to show the spiritual nature of the law, to present its far-reaching principles, and to make plain its eternal obligation. MB 49.1

"The divine beauty of the character of Christ, of whom the noblest and most gentle among men are but a faint reflection; of whom Solomon by the Spirit of inspiration wrote, He is "the chiefest among ten thousand, ..., yea, he altogether lovely" (Song of Solomon 5:10-16); of whom David, seeing Him in prophetic vision, said, "Thou art fairer than the children of men" (Psalm 45:2); Jesus, the express image of the Father's person, the effulgence of His glory; the self-denying Redeemer, throughout His pilgrimage of love on earth, was a living representation of the character of the law of God. In His life it is made manifest that heaven-born love, Christlike principles, underlie the laws of eternal rectitude. MB 49.2

"Till heaven and earth pass," said Jesus, 'one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.' By His own obedience to the law, Christ testified to its immutable character and proved that through His grace it could be perfectly obeyed by every son and daughter of Adam. On the mount He declared that not the smallest iota should pass from the law till all things should be accomplished—all things that concern the human race, all that relates to the plan of redemption. He does not teach that the law is ever to be abrogated, but He fixes the eye upon the utmost verge of man's horizon and assures us that until this point is reached the law will retain its authority so that none may suppose it was His mission to abolish the precepts of the law. So long as heaven and earth continue, the holy principles of God's law will remain. His righteousness, "like the great mountains" (Psalm 36:6), will continue, a source of blessing, sending forth streams to refresh the earth." MB 49.3

Thursday, May 28

Knowing and Doing

Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount by leaving His listeners with a poignant final challenge. What was it? Read Matthew 7:24–29

"Jesus ended His teaching on the mount with an illustration that presented with startling vividness the importance of putting in practice the words He had spoken. Among the crowds that thronged about the Saviour were many who had spent their lives about the Sea of Galilee. As they sat upon the hillside, listening to the words of Christ, they could see valleys and ravines through which the mountain streams found their way to the sea. In summer these streams often wholly disappeared, leaving only a dry and dusty channel. But when the wintry storms burst upon the hills, the rivers became fierce, raging torrents, at times overspreading the valleys and bearing everything away on their resistless flood. Often, then, the hovels reared by the peasants on the grassy plain, apparently beyond the reach of danger, were swept away. But high upon the hills were houses built upon the rock. In some parts of the land were dwellings built wholly of rock, and many of them had withstood the tempests of a thousand years. These houses were reared with toil and difficulty. They were not easy of access, and their location appeared less inviting than the grassy plain. But they were founded upon the rock, and wind and flood and tempest beat upon them in vain. MB 147.2

"Like the builders of these houses on the rock, said Jesus, is he who shall receive the words that I have spoken to you, and shall hear the foundation of his character and life. Centuries before, the prophet Isaiah had written, "The word of our God shall stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8); and Peter, long after the Sermon on the Mount was given, quoting these words of Isaiah added, "This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:25). The word of God is the only steadfast thing our world knows. It is the sure foundation. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," said Jesus, "but My words shall not pass away." Matthew 24:35. MB 148.1

"The great principles of the law, of the very nature of God, are embodied in the words of Christ on the mount. Whoever builds upon them is building upon Christ, the Rock of ages. In receiving the word, we receive Christ. And only those who thus receive His words are building upon Him. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 3:11. "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. Christ, the Word, the revelation of God,—the manifestation of His character, His law, His love, His life,—is the only foundation upon which we can build a character that will endure. MB 148.2

"We build on Christ by obeying His word. It is not the who merely enjoys righteousness, that is righteous, but he who does righteousness. Holiness is not rapture; it is the result of surrendering all to God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father. When the children of Israel were encamped on the borders of the Promised Land, it was not enough for them to have a knowledge of Canaan, or to sing the songs of Canaan. This alone would not bring them into possession of the vineyards and olive groves of the goodly land. They could make it theirs in truth only by occupation, by complying with the conditions, by exercising living faith in God, by appropriating His promises to themselves, while they obeyed His instruction." MB 149.1

Friday, May 29

Further Thought

"Christ, the true foundation, is a living stone; His life is imparted to all that are built upon Him. "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." "Each several building, fitly framed together, growth into a holy temple in the Lord." 1 Peter 2:5 , R.V.; Ephesians 2:21 , R.V. The stones became one with the foundation; for a common life dwells in all. That building, the temple prepared for the Lord, cannot be overthrow; for— MB 150.2

"That which shares the life of God,

With Him survivedh all.' MB 150.3

"But every building erected on other foundation than God's word will fall. He who, like the jews in Christ's day, builds on the foundation of human ideas and opinions, of forms and ceremonies of man's invention, or on any works that he can do independently of the grace of Christ, is erecting his structure of character upon the shifting sand. The fierce tempests of temptation will sweep away the sandy foundation and leave his house a wreck on the shores of time. MB 150.4

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God, ..., Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.' Isaiah 28:16, 17. MB 151.1

"But today mercy pleads with the sinner. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel 33:11. The voice that speaks to the impenitent today is the voice of Him who in heart anguish exclaimed as He beheld the city of His love: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gatherneth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Luke 13:34, 35 , R.V. In Jerusalem, Jesus beheld a symbol of the world that had rejected and despised His grace. He was weeping, O stubborn heart, for you! Even when Jesus' tears were shed upon the mount, Jerusalem might yet have repented, and escaped her doom. For a little space the Gift of heaven still waited her acceptance. So, O heart, to you Christ is still speaking in accents of love: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Revelation 3:20; 2 Corinthians 6:2. MB 151.2

"You who are resting your hope on self are building on the sand. But it is not yet too late to escape the impending ruin. Before the tempest breaks, flee to the sure foundation. "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." "Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end." Isaiah 28:16, R.V.; 45:22, 41:10, 45:17. MB 152.1

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