

WEEK 4 THE THREE ANGELS AND THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGEMENT

Sabbath Day Remnant Church of Namibia (SDRCN)

WEEK 4-LESSONS 1

SECTION 1-THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES

The coming of the three angels of Revelation 14, their mission on earth, were foretold by Christ two thousands years ago. He revealed their coming in the parable of the Wheat and tares (Matt. 3:36-43). This parable foretells the coming of the reapers (Matt. 13:30). These reapers are angels (Matt. 13:39). Read on to establish the link of these reapers to the three angels of Revelation 14: 6-9. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. It explains an unclear idea by laying it alongside a clear idea to help interested listeners to better understand it. In a parable, the known clarifies the unknown, making it more interesting, easier to remember and to apply in life, so is the revelation of the three angels. "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matt. 13:24-30).

Interpretations

Christ sowed the good seed (Matt. 13:37), the field is the church of God in the world (EW, p. 70; Matt. 13:38). The enemy who sowed the bad seed is Satan, the harvest is the end of the world, the reapers are the angels (Matt. 13:39). The wheat are Christians, the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the wicked, the children of the Devil (Matt. 13:38). At the end of the world (Matt. 13:40), Christ shall send His angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity (Matt. 13:41).

The Conflict

"But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." (Matt. 13:25). The phrase "slept" signifies negligence on the part of the labourers of the field. "If faithfulness and vigilance had been preserved, if there had been no sleeping or negligence upon the part of any, the enemy would not have had so favorable an opportunity to sow tares among the wheat." (3T, p. 113.1). The field in which only wheat were sown, now has tares also sprung up. The servants of the householder proposed to remove the tares from the wheat, but the householder said, "...Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." (Matt. 13:29). He then provides the solution to the problem. "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matt. 13:29).

A call to prudence

Prudence refers to a caution and reserve and to avoid evil that can result in executing that which is good. The householder used prudence in executing that which is right. The fact that the matter you may be handling seems innocent and straight forward, the manner of executing that which is right to do, can lead to an evil end. Therefore, there is need for prudence even in handling matters that seem straight forward and innocent. Upon their suggestion to remove the tares, they are instead instructed by the householder, "...not forcibly pull up the tares, lest in rooting them up the precious blades will become loosened." (3T, p. 113.2).

“There is always a class who are more influenced by individuals than they are by the Spirit of God and sound principles; and, in their unconsecrated state, these are ever ready to take sides with the wrong and give their pity and sympathy to the very ones who least deserve it. These sympathizers have a powerful influence with others; things are seen in a perverted light, great harm is done, and many souls are ruined. Satan in his rebellion took a third part of the angels. They turned from the Father and from His Son, and united with the instigator of rebellion. With these facts before us we should move with the greatest caution. What can we expect but trial and perplexity in our connection with men and women of peculiar minds? We must bear this and avoid the necessity of rooting up the tares, lest the wheat be rooted up also.” (3T, p. 114.2).

“The tares so closely resembled the wheat that the laborers might easily be deceived when the blades were green, and root out the good plants. But when the field was white for the harvest, then the worthless weeds bore no resemblance to the wheat that bowed under the weight of its full, ripe heads. Then the tares were ruthlessly plucked up and destroyed, while the precious grain was gathered into barns. Sinners who make false pretensions of piety mingle together for a time with the true followers of Christ, and this external semblance of Christianity is calculated to deceive many. But in the harvest of the world there will be no likeness between good and evil. The wicked will be gathered from the righteous, to trouble them no more forever.” (2SP 249.1).

The Harvest

These reapers which are the angels, are to be sent in the time of the harvest. “Let both grow together UNTIL the harvest and in the *time of harvest I will say to the reapers*, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” (Matt. 13:30). The growing together of the wheat and tares is not indefinite, but only UNTIL the harvest. The word “UNTIL” denotes that the growing together is not indefinite but that it will come to an end at a certain period of time and that period is the time of harvest. The wheat and tares can grow together only UNTIL the harvest. When the harvest has come, the growing together ceases because the separation of the two commences. By interpretation, it means that the wicked and the righteous will co-exist and mingle in the church UNTIL the harvest. The time of the harvest is also identified in this text as that time when the angels shall come.

“Let both grow together UNTIL THE HARVEST: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” (Matt. 13:30). The time of the harvest is also referred to as the end of the world. “the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.” (Matt. 13:39).

The arrival of the reapers

One shall know the time of the harvest by paying close attention to the seasons. The time for sowing and harvest are always distinct and separate. Alternatively, if you are unable to identify the season in which the reapers shall come, you will know when they arrive that the season has come. Their coming signals the time of the harvest. They come for one mission-to separate the wheat from the tares. This work of separating the wheat from the tares takes place in “THE TIME OF THE HARVEST”.

This work of harvest or separating the wheat from the tares, brings an end to the growing together of the wheat and the tares. “*Let both grow together until the Harvest.*”

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and

brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” (Rev. 14:6-10). “The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. There cannot be a third without the first and second. These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been, and the things that will be.” (Manuscript Release, vol.1, p. 43.2).

The first angel. “The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844.” (Manuscript Release, vol.1, p. 43). “The prophecy of the first angel's message, brought to view in Revelation 14, found its fulfillment in the Advent movement of 1840-1844,” (4SP, p. 222).

The second angel. “The proclamation, “Babylon is fallen,” was given in the summer of 1844, and as the result, about fifty thousand withdrew from these churches,” (4SP, p. 232).

The third angel. “When Christ entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of the atonement, he committed to his servants the last message of mercy to be given to the world. Such is the warning of the third angel of Revelation 14.” (4SP, p. 273.1).

“As foretold in the Scriptures, the ministration of Christ in the most holy place began at the termination of the prophetic days in 1844.” (4SP, p. 273.2). “Revelation 14:6, 7, foretells the proclamation of the first angel's message. Then the prophet continues: “there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, . . . And the third angel followed them...They are three only in the order of their rise. But having risen, they go on together, and are inseparable.” (GC88, p. 685.3).

“The growth of the tares among the wheat would draw special attention to it. The grain would be subjected to severe criticism. Indeed, the whole field might be set down as worthless by some superficial observer, or by one who delighted to discover evil. The sower might be condemned by him, as one who had mingled the bad seed with the good for his own wicked purpose. Just so the erring and hypocritical ones who profess to follow Jesus bring reproach upon the cause of Christianity, and cause the world to doubt concerning the truths of Christ. As the presence of the tares among the wheat counteracted to a great degree the work of the sower, so sin among the people of God, frustrates, in a measure, the plan of Jesus to save fallen man from the power of Satan and render the barren ground of the human heart fruitful of good works.” (2SP 248.2).

The Mission

“I then saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, “Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner.” (EW, p. 118.1). “I saw the rapidity with which this delusion was spreading...It seemed that the whole world was on board, that there could not be one left. Said the angel, “*They are binding in bundles ready to burn.*” Then he showed me the conductor, who appeared like a stately, fair person, whom all the passengers looked up to and revered. I was perplexed and asked my attending angel who it was. He said, “It is Satan... He is the conductor in the form of an angel of light...I asked the angel if there were none left. He bade me look in an opposite direction, and I saw a little company traveling a narrow pathway. All seemed to be firmly united, *bound together by the truth, in bundles, or companies.* Said the angel, “The third angel is binding, or sealing, them in bundles for the heavenly garner.” (Early Writings, 88.2, 3). The reapers (Matt. 13:29) or angels (Matt. 13:39), are the first, second and third angels of Revelation chapter 14. Their mission is to separate the wheat from the tares. Therefore, the work of separating the wheat from the tares, began in 1844. .

SECTION 2: THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGEMENT

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17).

The A Court

This is the first court to which Apostle Peter was shown to be exclusively for the church of God. “Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man—to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.” (GC, p. 479.3). “Daniel was shown this judgement to commence after the expiration of the prophetic period of 2300 days. “And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” (Dan. 8:14). This prophecy was fulfilled in 1844. “As foretold in the Scriptures, the ministration of Christ in the most holy place began at the termination of the prophetic days in 1844. To this time apply the words of the Revelator, “The temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.” [Revelation 11:19]” (4SP, p. 273.2).

“The Ancient of Days is God the Father. Says the Psalmist: “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to ever-lasting, Thou art God.” (Psalm 90:2). It is He, the source of all being, and the fountain of all law, that is to preside in the judgment. And holy angels as ministers and witnesses, in number “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thou-sands,” attend this great tribunal.” (GC, p. 479.2). “In the typical service, only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin-offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the day of atonement. So, in the great day of final atonement and investigative Judgment, the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. “Judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?” [1 Peter 4:17.] (GC, p. 480.1).

“In the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment, the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. . . . The books of record in heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the judgment.” (FLB, p. 210.2). But why was an investigation necessary? Weren’t sins, when confessed, immediately forgiven and forever forgotten? Forgiven, yes, but not yet forgotten. “The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering re-moved the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the day of atonement.” (CCh, p. 348.1).

“In the great day of final award, the dead are to be “judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” (Revelation 20:12). Then by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven. Thus, the sanctuary will be freed, or cleansed, from the record of sin. In the type, this great work of atonement, or blotting out of sins, was represented by the services of the Day of Atonement—the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary, which was accomplished by the removal, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, of the sins by which it had been polluted.” (PP, p. 357.6).

The B Court

The B Court, comes after the A Court. The A Court is the judgement exclusively reserved for the church where God Himself is the presiding Judge. The B Court is the judgement exclusively reserved for the wicked where Christ and His saints are the judges. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1 Cor. 6:2). Also read Daniel 7:22. Together with Christ, the saints will judge the wicked during 1000 years. It is this judgement that John was shown the following: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years," (Rev. 20:4). Daniel also spoke of the same (Dan. 7:22).

"During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection, the judgment of the wicked takes place. . . . At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God...It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, "the saints shall judge the world." (1 Corinthians 6:2). In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death." (FLB, p. 354).

The B Court takes place during 1000 years which commences at the second coming of Christ. (Rev. 20:1, 10:1) when Christ shall detain Satan and his angels (Rev. 20:1, 2, Jude 1:6). The duration of this detention is said to be 1000 years (Rev. 20:2). During these 1000 years, the wicked remain dead as they were destroyed by the brightness of Jesus Christ at His second coming (2 Thess. 2:8, Rev. 20:5, Isa. 24:1-4). In this state they remain during the 1000 years. But the righteous, those who come up in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6) at Christ's second coming, together with those who will be translated without testing death (1 Cor. 15:52-54), shall meet Christ in the air and commence the journey to heaven (1 Thess. 4:16-17) where they will together with Christ sit to judge the wicked (1 Cor. 6:2). However, the righteous must themselves first undergo the scrutiny of the investigative judgement before they are privileged to be judges. These were judged in the investigative judgement, the A Court, and having been found worthy, they became judges in the B Court, the court of the wicked. King David was shown the judgement of the wicked (Ps. 149, 7- 9), and so was Daniel (Dan. 7: 18, 22). It is at this time that the saints will possess the kingdom (Dan. 7:18) after being translated and taken to heaven (Rev. 3:21). The sitting in judgement comes only after they overcame, redeemed, translated and taken to heaven to possess the kingdom. It is this judgement of which John speaks about (Rev. 20:4).

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17). "The judgment of the wicked, for the determination of the measure of their punishment, will take place during the one-thousand-year period between the first and second resurrections. (Rev. 20:4; Psalms 149:4-9.) The first resurrection at the second coming of Christ embraces only the righteous dead. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. "Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?" 1 Peter 4:17". (GC, p. 480).

The C Court

This is the last session of God's judgement. It involves the execution, implementation, effecting or carrying out the decisions that were taken in the A and B Courts. This execution takes place after one thousand years. While the venues for the A and B Courts are in heaven, the venue of the C Court is on earth. Read again *The Faith I Live By*, p. 354 as quoted above. During the thousand years which follow Christ's second coming, the saints join the Lord in judging the wicked (GC 661). At the close of the Millennium the drama reaches its peak when "the whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God" (GC 668). "What a solemn scene it will be! What a reckoning will have to be made for nailing to the cross One who came to our world as a living epistle of the law. God will ask each one the question, What have you done with my only-begotten Son? What will those answer who have refused to accept the truth? They will be obliged to say, 'We hated Jesus, and cast Him out.'" (5BC 1106, 1107). Before the assembled inhabitants of the universe Christ pronounces sentence upon the rebels against His government. The books of record are opened and the wicked are conscious of every sin they have ever committed (GC 666).

"The whole life will come in review like the scenes in a panorama" (RH 11-4-1884, p. 690). The sins of all the wicked will be openly known. Nothing will be hid. "When the Judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, there will be many astonishing disclosures. . . . Secret sins will then be laid open to the view of all. Motives and intentions which have been hidden in the dark chambers of the heart will be revealed. Designing ambitions, selfish purposes, will be seen where the outward appearance told only of a desire to honor God and to do good to men. . . . Hypocritical, ambitious teachers may now be admired and exalted by men; but God, who knows the secrets of the heart, will strip off the deceptive covering, and reveal them as they are. Every hypocrite will be unmasked." (RH 1-1-1884, p. 2).

"In that solemn and awful hour the unfaithfulness of the husband will be opened to the wife, and the unfaithfulness of the wife, to the husband. Parents will then learn, for the first time, what was the real character of their children." (RH 3-27-1888, p. 194). "The fruit of every selfish, arbitrary exaction will be made plain, and men will see the results of their doings even as God sees them." (TM 224, See also LS 241, 242.). Sin will be confessed then, and the confession will be "most public" (RH 12-16-1880, p. 770). Too late to benefit the wrongdoer or to save others from deception, the confession will only testify that the sinner's condemnation is just. Even "Satan bows down, and confesses the justice of his sentence" (GC 670). This, of course, is the primary purpose of the whole judgment process. It is God's means of vindicating His own character and His government. It is His method of convincing the universe that He has been eminently fair and just in all His dealing with men and angels since time began. "The judgment scene will take place in the presence of all the worlds; for in this judgment the government of God will be vindicated, and His law will stand forth as 'holy, and just, and good.' Then every case will be decided, and sentence will be passed upon all. Sin will not then appear attractive, but will be seen in all its hideous magnitude." (7BC 986).

"When speaking to congregations, there is always before me the final judgment, which is to be held in the presence of the world, when the law of God's government is to be vindicated, His name glorified, His wisdom acknowledged and testified of as just to believers and unbelievers. This is not the judgment of one person, nor of a nation, but of a whole world of intelligent beings, of all orders, of all characters. The judgment takes place first upon the dead, then upon the living, then the whole universe will be assembled to hear the sentence. I feel as if I were in the presence of the whole universe of heaven, bearing my message for time and for eternity." (Letter 109, 1898).

"In the day of final judgment, every lost soul will understand the nature of his own rejection of truth. The cross will be presented, and its real bearing will be seen by every mind that has been blinded by transgression. Before the vision of Calvary with its mysterious Victim, sinners will stand condemned. Every lying excuse will be swept away. Human apostasy will appear in its heinous character. Men will see what their choice has been. Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy will then have been made plain. In the judgment of the universe, God will stand clear of blame for the existence or continuance of evil. It will be demonstrated that the divine decrees are not accessory to sin. There was no defect in God's government, no cause for disaffection. When the thoughts of all hearts shall be revealed, both the loyal and the rebellious will unite in declaring, 'Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, Oh Lord, and glorify Thy name? . . . for Thy judgments are made manifest' (Revelation 15:3, 4)." (DA 58).

SECTION 3: WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

How shall a man be just with God? How shall the sinner be made righteous? It is only through Christ that we can be brought into harmony with God, with holiness; but how are we to come to Christ? Many are asking the same question as did the multitude on the Day of Pentecost, when, convicted of sin, they cried out, "What shall we do?" The first word of Peter's answer was, "Repent." Acts 2:37, 38. At another time, shortly after, he said, "Repent, . . . and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19. Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.

There are many who fail to understand the true nature of repentance. Multitudes sorrow that they have sinned and even make an outward reformation because they fear that their wrongdoing will bring suffering upon themselves. But this is not repentance in the Bible sense. They lament the suffering rather than the sin. Such was the grief of Esau when he saw that the birthright was lost to him forever. Balaam, terrified by the angel standing in his pathway with drawn sword, acknowledged his guilt lest he should lose his life; but there was no genuine repentance for sin, no conversion of purpose, no abhorrence of evil. Judas Iscariot, after betraying his [p. 24] Lord, exclaimed, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." Matthew 27:4.

The confession was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a fearful looking for of judgment. The consequences that were to result to him filled him with terror, but there was no deep, heartbreaking grief in his soul, that he had betrayed the spotless Son of God and denied the Holy One of Israel. Pharaoh, when suffering under the judgments of God, acknowledged his sin in order to escape further punishment, but returned to his defiance of Heaven as soon as the plagues were stayed. These all lamented the results of sin, but did not sorrow for the sin itself.

But when the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God's holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. The "Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," illumines the secret chambers of the soul, and the hidden things of darkness are made manifest. John 1:9. Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart. The sinner has a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and feels the terror of appearing, in his own guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, the joy of purity; he longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven.

The prayer of David after his fall, illustrates the nature of true sorrow for sin. His repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate [p. 25] his guilt; no desire to escape the judgment threatened, inspired his prayer. David saw the enormity of his transgression; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. He longed for the joy of holiness—to be restored to harmony and communion with God. This was the language of his soul: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no guile." (Psalm 32:1, 2).

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness: According unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. . . . For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. . . .Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. . . .Create in me a clean heart, O God; And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; And uphold me with Thy free spirit. . . .Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation: And my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness." (Psalm 51:1-14). A repentance such as this, is beyond the reach of our own power to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ, who ascended up on high and has given gifts unto men.

Just here is a point on which many may err, and hence they fail of receiving the help that Christ desires to give them. They think that they cannot come to Christ unless they first repent, and that repentance prepares for the forgiveness of their sins. It is true that repentance does precede the forgiveness of sins; for it is only the broken and contrite heart that will feel the need of a Saviour. But must the sinner wait till he has repented before he can come to Jesus? Is repentance to be made an obstacle between the sinner and the Saviour? The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28). It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance. Peter made the matter clear in his statement to the Israelites when he said, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5:31). We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ.

Christ is the source of every right impulse. He is the only one that can implant in the heart enmity against sin. Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own sinfulness, is an evidence that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts. Jesus has said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." (John 12:32). Christ must be revealed to the sinner as the Saviour dying for the sins of the world; and as we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins to unfold to our minds and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul.

It is true that men sometimes become ashamed of their sinful ways, and give up some of their evil habits, before they are conscious that they are being drawn to Christ. But whenever they make an effort to reform, from a sincere desire to do right, it is the power of Christ that is drawing them. An influence of which they are unconscious works upon the soul, and the conscience is quickened, and the outward life is amended. And as Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, the commandment comes home to the conscience. The wickedness of their life, the deep-seated sin of the soul, is revealed to them. They begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ, and exclaim, "What is sin, that it should require such a sacrifice for the redemption of its victim? Was all this love, all this suffering, all this humiliation, demanded, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life?"

The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son.

The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness. Through influences seen and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him. To all these souls, who are vainly seeking to drink from the broken cisterns of this world, the divine message is addressed, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17). You who in heart long for something better than this world can give, recognize this longing as the voice of God to your soul. Ask Him to give you repentance, to reveal Christ to you in His infinite love, in His perfect purity. In the Saviour's life the principles of God's law—love to God and man—were perfectly exemplified. Benevolence, unselfish love, was the life of His soul. It is as we behold Him, as the light from our Saviour falls upon us, that we see the sinfulness of our own hearts.

We may have flattered ourselves, as did Nicodemus, that our life has been upright, that our moral character is correct, and think that we need not humble the heart before God, like the common sinner: but when the light from Christ shines into our souls, we shall see how impure we are; we shall discern the selfishness of motive, the enmity against God, that has defiled every act of life. Then we shall know that our own righteousness is indeed as filthy rags, and that the blood of Christ alone can cleanse us from the defilement of sin, and renew our hearts in His own likeness. One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character. It makes apparent the unhallowed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips. The sinner's acts of disloyalty in making void the law of God, are exposed to his sight, and his spirit is stricken and afflicted under the searching influence of the Spirit of God. He loathes himself as he views the pure, spotless character of Christ.

When the prophet Daniel beheld the glory surrounding the heavenly messenger that was sent unto him, he was overwhelmed with a sense of his own weakness and imperfection. Describing the effect of the wonderful scene, he says, "There remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." (Daniel 10:8). The soul thus touched will hate its selfishness, abhor its self-love, and will seek, through Christ's righteousness, for the purity of heart that is in harmony with the law of God and the character of Christ. Paul says that as "touching the righteousness which is in the law"—as far as outward acts were concerned—he was "blameless" (Philippians 3:6); but when the spiritual character of the law was discerned, he saw himself a sinner. Judged by the letter of the law as men apply it to the outward life, he had abstained from sin; but when he looked into the depths of its holy precepts, and saw himself as God saw him, he bowed in humiliation and confessed his guilt. He says, "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (Romans 7:9). When he saw the spiritual nature of the law, sin appeared in its true hideousness, and his self-esteem was gone.

God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man; but however trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God. Man's judgment is partial, imperfect; but God estimates all

things as they really are. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; while pride, selfishness, and covetousness too often go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God; for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe. He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. The poor publican who prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13), regarded himself as a very wicked man, and others looked upon him in the same light; but he felt his need, and with his burden of guilt and shame he came before God, asking for His mercy. His heart was open for the Spirit of God to do its gracious work and set him free from the power of sin. The Pharisee's boastful, self-righteous prayer showed that his heart was closed against the influence of the Holy Spirit. Because of his distance from God, he had no sense of his own defilement, in contrast with the perfection of the divine holiness. He felt no need, and he received nothing.

If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think they are not good enough to come to Christ. Do you expect to become better through your own efforts? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." (Jeremiah 13:23). There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are. But let none deceive themselves with the thought that God, in His great love and mercy, will yet save even the rejecters of His grace. The exceeding sinfulness of sin can be estimated only in the light of the cross. When men urge that God is too good to cast off the sinner, let them look to Calvary. It was because there was no other way in which man could be saved, because without this sacrifice it was impossible for the human race to escape from the defiling power of sin, and be restored to communion with holy beings,—impossible for them again to become partakers of spiritual life,—it was because of this that Christ took upon Himself the guilt of the disobedient and suffered in the sinner's stead. The love and suffering and death of the Son of God all testify to the terrible enormity of sin and declare that there is no escape from its power, no hope of the higher life, but through the submission of the soul to Christ.

The impenitent sometimes excuse themselves by saying of professed Christians, "I am as good as they are. They are no more self-denying, sober, or circumspect in their conduct than I am. They love pleasure and self-indulgence as well as I do." Thus they make the faults of others an excuse for their own neglect of duty. But the sins and defects of others do not excuse anyone, for the Lord has not given us an erring human pattern. The spotless Son of God has been given as our example, and those who complain of the wrong course of professed Christians are the ones who should show better lives and nobler examples. If they have so high a conception of what a Christian should be, is not their own sin so much the greater? They know what is right, and yet refuse to do it. Beware of procrastination. Do not put off the work of forsaking your sins and seeking purity of heart through Jesus. Here is where thousands upon thousands have erred to their eternal loss. I will not here dwell upon the shortness and uncertainty of life; but there is a terrible danger—a danger not sufficiently understood—in delaying to yield to the pleading voice of God's Holy Spirit, in choosing to live in sin; for such this delay really is. Sin, however small it may be esteemed, can be indulged in only at the peril of infinite loss. What we do not overcome, will overcome us and work out our destruction.

Adam and Eve persuaded themselves that in so small a matter as eating of the forbidden fruit there could not result such terrible consequences as God had declared. But this small matter was the transgression of God's immutable and holy law, and it separated man from God and opened

the floodgates of death and untold woe upon our world. Age after age there has gone up from our earth a continual cry of mourning, and the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain as a consequence of man's disobedience. Heaven itself has felt the effects of his rebellion against God. Calvary stands as a memorial of the amazing sacrifice required to atone for the transgression of the divine law. Let us not regard sin as a trivial thing.

Every act of transgression, every neglect or rejection of the grace of Christ, is reacting upon yourself; it is hardening the heart, depraving the will, benumbing the understanding, and not only making you less inclined to yield, but less capable of yielding, to the tender pleading of God's Holy Spirit. Many are quieting a troubled conscience with the thought that they can change a course of evil when they choose; that they can trifle with the invitations of mercy, and yet be again and again impressed. They think that after doing despite to the Spirit of grace, after casting their influence on the side of Satan, in a moment of terrible extremity they can change their course. But this is not so easily done. The experience, the education, of a lifetime, has so thoroughly molded the character that few then desire to receive the image of Jesus.

Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire, persistently cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. Every sinful indulgence strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The man who manifests an infidel hardihood, or a stolid indifference to divine truth, is but reaping the harvest of that which he has himself sown. In all the Bible there is not a more fearful warning against trifling with evil than the words of the wise man that the sinner "shall be holden with the cords of his sins." (Proverbs 5:22). Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not desire to be set free, if we will not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." (2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8).

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart"—the human heart, with its conflicting emotions of joy and sorrow; the wandering, wayward heart, which is the abode of so much impurity and deceit. (1 Samuel 16:7). He knows its motives, its very intents and purposes. Go to Him with your soul all stained as it is. Like the psalmist, throw its chambers open to the all-seeing eye, exclaiming, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139: 23, 24). Many accept an intellectual religion, a form of godliness, when the heart is not cleansed. Let it be your prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10). Deal truly with your own soul. Be as earnest, as persistent, as you would be if your mortal life were at stake. This is a matter to be settled between God and your own soul, settled for eternity. A supposed hope, and nothing more, will prove your ruin.

Study God's word prayerfully. That word presents before you, in the law of God and the life of Christ, the great principles of holiness, without which "no man shall see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14). It convinces of sin; it plainly reveals the way of salvation. Give heed to it as the voice of God speaking to your soul. As you see the enormity of sin, as you see yourself as you really are, do not give up to despair. It was sinners that Christ came to save. We have not to reconcile God to us, but—O wondrous love!—God in Christ is "reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Corinthians 5:19). He is wooing by His tender love the hearts of His erring children. No earthly parent could be as patient with the faults and mistakes of his children, as is God with those He seeks to save. No one could plead more tenderly with the transgressor. No human lips ever poured out more tender entreaties to the wanderer than does He. All His promises, His warnings, are but the breathing of unutterable love.

When Satan comes to tell you that you are a great sinner, look up to your Redeemer and talk of His merits. That which will help you is to look to His light. Acknowledge your sin, but tell the enemy that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" and that you may be saved by His matchless love. (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus asked Simon a question in regard to two debtors. One owed his lord a small sum, and the other owed him a very large sum; but he forgave them both, and Christ asked Simon which debtor would love his lord most. Simon answered, "He to whom he forgave most." (Luke 7:43). We have been great sinners, but Christ died that we might be forgiven. The merits of His sacrifice are sufficient to present to the Father in our behalf. Those to whom He has forgiven most will love Him most, and will stand nearest to His throne to praise Him for His great love and infinite sacrifice. It is when we most fully comprehend the love of God that we best realize the sinfulness of sin. When we see the length of the chain that was let down for us, when we understand something of the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf, the heart is melted with tenderness and contrition.



WEEK 4-LESSONS

Sabbath Day Remnant Church of Namibia (SDRCN)

Student Full names: _____
Student Identification ID. _____
Country of Origin. _____
Date of submission. _____

Instructions. Answer all questions within one week of the commencement of your study. Some questions will require detailed explanation. Your answers should not exceed two typed pages or four hand written pages. Send your answers through WhatsApp to 0811271961. OR to the following email: drfmwilima@gmail.com

Question 1. What does the term "harvest" means?

Answer. _____

Question 2. Who are the harvesters and what do they harvest?

Answer. _____

Question 3. When is this harvest taking place in prophetic time?

Answer. _____

Question 4. What event leads to the coming of the reapers or harvesters?

Answer. _____

Question 5. Where (venue) does each of the ABC Courts taking place?

Answer. _____

Question 6. Who are the judges of each of the ABC Courts?

Answer. _____

Question 7. Explain how you understand the statement found in 1 Peter 4:17 regarding God's judgement of the world.

Answer. _____

Question 8. What judgements take place within the context of the ABC Courts?

Answer. _____

Question 9. Explain in detail the process of being saved as outlined in Acts 2:37, 38.

Answer. _____

Question 10. What does true repentance entails?

Answer. _____

END