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***The following study is intended to be foundational in nature. The student and/or Teacher is expected to draw on the thoughts presented as he/she depends on the Holy Spirit to gleam deeper insights, make practical applications, and drive the messages home to the heart so that***

***the voice of God is heard in the study or presentation.***

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| **Red Script** = Main Point | **Blue Script=** Directive / Personal  | Yellow Script= Do not miss this point  | Double underline= Important to remember | Boxed= **Biblical Text** & SDA Commentary Reference | **PURPLE SCRIPT:** A Possible Answer**Green: EGW** |

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| Lesson #1**“God’s Mission *to* Us: Part I”** September 10 – October 6 | 4th. Quarter Sabbath School Bible Study Guide***“GOD’S MISSION, MY MISSION”*** October / November / December 2023 |

**Memory text*:*** *“Then the Lord God called Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’” (Genesis 3:9, NKJV).*

Mission finds its origin and purpose only in God. This mission did not begin with Abram’s call *(Gen. 12:1-4)* or with the Exodus *(Exod. 12:31-42)*. It did not begin even with Jesus Christ on the earth *(Matt. 1:18-25)* or with Paul’s missionary journeys *(Acts 13:4-14:26)*. This mission began with God Himself, when He brought the universe into existence and later created humanity *(Gen. 1:26, 27)*.

 In the Scriptures, we see a God who intentionally reaches out and desires to be with His children. From the beginning, He establishes a relationship with Adam and Eve. Even after sin enters, He continues His mission, but now it is to reestablish His relationship with humanity. In the end, God’s mission will be accomplished *(Revelation 21, 22)*, which is why we should be motivated in the work of proclaiming the eternal gospel to the world *(Rev. 14:6,7)*.

 The foundation of any mission endeavor, therefore, must be centered on a relationship with the Creator and with the proper understanding of His missionary nature and character. But before we understand the mission of God, it is essential to better understand the God of mission.

***From the writings of Ellen G. White... (Hereafter referenced to as (SOP): “As the wheellike complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of this earth. PK 536.1***

***The history of nations speaks to us today. To every nation and to every individual God has assigned a place in His great plan. Today men and nations are being tested by the plummet in the hand of Him who makes no mistake. All are by their own choice deciding their destiny, and God is overruling all for the accomplishment of His purposes.***

***The prophecies which the great I AM has given in His word, uniting link after link in the chain of events, from eternity in the past to eternity in the future, tell us where we are today in the procession of the ages and what may be expected in the time to come. All that prophecy has foretold as coming to pass, until the present time, has been traced on the pages of history, and we may be assured that all which is yet to come will be fulfilled in its order.”- Prophets and Kings, p. 536.***

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| **Sunday October 1** | **“The God Who Reaches Out to Us”**  |

***(SOP): “The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering.” -Christ Object Lessons, p. 310.***

God created us in His image and likeness. He gave us a perfect world, and His purpose was that we would live in perfect connection with Him, a relationship centered in His most precious attribute: love. But for love to be real, God also gave us another precious gift: free will—the freedom to choose which way to follow. Of course, God gave clear instructions to Adam and Eve about the danger and deadly consequences of disobedience *(Gen 2:16, 17)*. Satan, in turn, deceptively persuaded Eve that she could eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but without any negative results. On the contrary, he claimed that they would “be like God, knowing good and evil” *(Gen. 3:5, NKJV)*. Unfortunately, Eve chose to eat and gave the fruit to Adam, who made the same choice. The perfect creation, then, was stained by sin.

That moment changed God’s original plan and purpose for the newly created planet Earth. The mission of salvation, which had been designed “before the foundation of the world” *(Eph. 1:4)*, had now to be implemented.

***(SOP): “Since the Fall the Lord has wrought out His will in the plan of redemption, a plan by which He is seeking to restore man to his original perfection. Christ's death on the cross has made it possible for God to receive and pardon every repentant soul...***

***The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant. So surely as there never was a time when God was not, so surely there never was a moment when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest His grace to humanity.” -The Faith I Live By, p.76.***

***Read Genesis 3:9-15. What were God’s first words to Adam after he and Eve fell, and why is that statement so significant theologically even today?***

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| ***Gen 3:9****And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?* ***10****And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.* ***11****And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?* ***12****And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* ***13****And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* ***14****And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:* ***15****And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.****9. Where art thou?*** Adam, who had always welcomed the divine approach, was now in hiding. He could not, however, be hidden from God, who called to Adam, not as if ignorant of his hiding place, but to bring him to confession. Adam sought to hide the sin behind its consequences, his disobedience behind his sense of shame, by proposing to God that he had hidden himself through embarrassment at his nakedness. His consciousness of the effects of sin was keener than of the sin itself. Here we witness for the first time the confusion between sin and punishment, which is characteristic of man in his fallen state. The results of sin are sensed and detested more than the sin itself.[[1]](#footnote-1) |

***A Possible Answer:***

***God’s first words to Adam after he and Eve fell were ‘where art thou?’, and why is that statement so significant theologically even today is that it portrays that God still desires to achieve His original plan and also His loving care is evidenced in His eternal pursuit of a personal relationship with mankind.***

***SOP): “The love of Jesus for souls cannot be measured. Christ died to save not only the few who accept Him; no, He came to our world to save every son and daughter of Adam. He came not to seek and save those who were faultless and lovely, but He came to seek and to save them that are lost. ‘I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’ He is the true Shepherd, ever ready to leave the flock which is in the fold and to go into the wilderness to seek for the lost sheep.”***

***-Manuscript Releases, vol. 19, p.330.***

Of course, God knew exactly where they were. Dominated by fear, Adam and Eve were the ones who needed to see what was going on. But they also needed to be confronted so they could understand the dreadful consequences of their sin. Satan also needed to be defeated. For that, God then began to present His mission: the plan of redemption *(see Gen. 23:14, 15)*—the only hope of “reconciling the world to Himself” *(2 Cor. 5:19, NKJV)*.

 We need to pay close attention, however, to the fact that before the confrontation and the promise of reconciliation, God came looking for fallen humanity. In spite of the seemingly hopeless situation, God essentially addresses two issues in His question to Adam: our fallen state and His missionary nature. We are lost and in desperate need for salvation. He is the one who finds us with the determination to save and to be with us.

***Throughout history, God continues to ask: “Where are you?” In your personal experience, what does this mean for you, and how have you answered Him?***

***Possible Answers:***

***In my personal experience, what the words... ‘Where are you’ mean for me:***

***(1) God is constantly and proactively seeking to be in contact with me.***

***(2) God desires for me to consider from an experiential standpoint... where I am, what I am doing and my purpose at any given moment in time.***

***How I’ve answered Him:***

***(1) Being intentional about my personal awareness of fulfilling His original plan for me.***

***(2) Discerning what is occupying my thoughts and time, and further, what I’m involved in.***

***(3) Analyzing the direction of my life as an outgrowth of the gifts He has given me.***

***(4) Recognizing and cooperating with the outworking of His providences in my life.***

***(SOP): 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***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.58925)***. 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. Steps to Christ, p.35.***

***(My Personal Application): I recognize that through my life experiences, God is calling me. He actually desires a personal relationship we ME... a sinner, though imperfect, growing and needy.***

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| **Monday October 2** | **“The God Who Longs to Be With Us”**  |

***SOP): “The all-merciful God shrouded His glory... that Moses could look upon it and live. So, in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, God communicated with Israel, revealing to men His will, and imparting to them His grace. God's glory was subdued, and His majesty veiled, that the weak vision of finite men might behold it. So Christ was to come in “the body of our humiliation” (***[***Philippians 3:21***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.60043)***, R. V.), ‘in the likeness of men.’ In the eyes of the world, He possessed no beauty that they should desire Him; yet He was the incarnate God, the light of heaven and earth. His glory was veiled, His greatness and majesty were hidden, that He might draw near to sorrowful, tempted men.***

***God commanded Moses for Israel, ‘Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them’ (***[***Exodus 25:8***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.4486)***), and He abode in the sanctuary, in the midst of His people. Through all their weary wandering in the desert, the symbol of His presence was with them. So, Christ set up His tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment. He pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life. ‘The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth’.”*** [***John 1:14***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.53160)***, R. V., margin. -The Desire of Ages, p. 23.***

***Read Genesis 17:7, Genesis 26:3, and Genesis 28:15. What was the main focus of God’s promise to Abraham and his descendants in these verses?***

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| ***Gen 17:7****And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.****7. I will establish my covenant.*** The terms and benefits of this covenant relate not only to Abraham as an individual but to all his descendants as well, both literal and spiritual. The promise here made to Abraham refers specifically to Christ (Gal. 3:16; Acts 2:30), and through Him, according to Paul, all Christians are to share in it (Gal. 3:29; Acts 16:31). A correct understanding of the terms of this covenant will go far toward maintaining a right relationship between God and the believer today. ***An everlasting covenant.*** The word translated “everlasting” does not by any means always indicate an endless period (see on Ex. 21:6). “Everlasting” as used in the Bible generally denotes circumstances or conditions that are to persist so long as the object to which they apply can, by virtue of its inherent nature, be affected by them. This is clear from such expressions as let the king “live for ever” (1 Kings 1:31; Neh. 2:3; etc.), which simply expresses the wish that the king may enjoy a long life. Inasmuch as all followers of Christ—the spiritual seed of Abraham—are heirs to the glorious covenant promises (Gal. 3:7, 27–29), the “everlasting covenant” must remain in effect as long as the plan of salvation is operative. The provisions of God’s covenant with Abraham are thus available throughout all generations. ***To be a God.*** This promise comprehends all the blessings of salvation and is a clear indication of the spiritual character of the Abrahamic covenant. God gives Himself to the one who enters into the covenant relationship, and in so doing bestows upon him all the privileges, the joys, and the glorious hope that come with kinship to God. He who thus becomes a son or a daughter of God can desire nothing more to make him happy, either in this life or in the life to come. It is as if God had said to Abraham, “Whatever I am or have, or whatever I can do, I will be and do for you and for your seed. All my boundless resources shall be employed for your protection, your consolation, and your salvation” (see Rom. 8:32). Blessed indeed are those whose God is Jehovah (Ps. 144:15). Under the terms of the everlasting covenant, God and the believer each gives himself without reservation to the other.***Gen 26:3****Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;****Gen 28:15****And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.* |

***A Possible Answer:***

***The main focus of God’s promise to Abraham and his descendants in these verses is that He would be with them throughout their generations.***

***(SOP): The marked prosperity which attended everything placed under Joseph's care was not the result of a direct miracle; but his industry, care, and energy were crowned with the divine blessing. Joseph attributed his success to the favor of God and even his idolatrous master accepted this as the secret of his unparalleled prosperity. Without steadfast, well-directed effort, however, success could never have been attained. God was glorified by the faithfulness of His servant. It was His purpose that in purity and uprightness the believer in God should appear in marked contrast to the worshipers of idols—that thus the light of heavenly grace might shine forth amid the darkness of heathenism. -Conflict and Courage, p. 74.***

In the Old Testament narrative, God continues to act according to His missionary nature in order to fulfill His purposes. For instance, after the Flood the People of Babel decided to gather in one place to build a city and a tower that would reach to the heavens. God intervened, confusing their language with the goal to scatter them around the world *(Gen. 11:1-9).* He then enlarged His mission, calling Abram (who later became Abraham) to be a channel of His blessings to the whole world *(Gen. 12:1-3)*. God’s promises to Abraham and his descendants were multifold, but one emerges above all. Several times God basically declared to them. “I will be [your] God.” “I will be with you.” “I am with you” *(see Gen. 1&:7, 8, Gen. 26:3, NKJV; Gen. 28:15, NKJV).*  [edit]

As history goes on, Joseph ends up in Egypt, but as an instrument of salvation to God’s people. In every step of Joseph’s experience—even in the most difficult moments of his life—the Bible affirms that “the Lord was with” him *(Gen. 39:2, 21, 23)*. Generations later, in the fulfillment of His mission, God then sent Moses to Pharaoh as the deliverer of His people from Egyptian slavery. During Moses,’ “commissioning,” God said to him: “I will certainly be with you” (*Exod.3:12, NKJV).* Time after time, Yahweh confirmed His deep desire to be with His people.

Read Exodus 29:43,45. What was one of the main purposes of the Old Testament sanctuary? God decided to be with His children in a different way. He confirmed to Moses His longing to dwell among the children of Israel in the building of the tabernacle and the establishment of a very intentional and purposeful system that would point to the ultimate instrument of His mission: Jesus Christ. “The sacrificial offerings, and the priesthood of the Jewish system were instituted to represent the death and mediatorial work of Christ. All those ceremonies had no meaning and no virtue, only as they related to Christ.” – Ellen G. White, Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath, December 17, 1872.

***What are ways that you experience God’s presence in your life?***

***Possible Answers:***

***Some ways that I experience God’s presence in my life:***

***(1) In states of wonderment when I am overwhelmed by His magnificence as in being alone in the dark of night and gazing upon the stars in the heaven.***

***(2) Through a mental consciousness during times when I am alone in prayer, study and meditation.***

***(3) The expressions of divine virtues (i.e., grace, love, joy, healing, and light, etc.) in certain situations in my life or in the lives of others.***

***(4) During times of intense personal ministry where I see and feel the presence of the Spirit of God.***

***(5) In moments of conviction of sin, or supernatural deliverances or overwhelming joy during musical renditions, the Spoken Word, and the reading of the Bible in certain translations.***

***(6) The solemnity of a new birth, the last moments of life during the onset of death, and the awareness of an indisputable supernatural element that breaks into the realm of the heavenly or earthly.***

***(7) The awareness and reception of that which is divine (non-human power, unlearned skills, the recollection of truth previously examined in the past and near-death deliverances).***

***(8) During an event that brings honor and glory to God.***

***SOP): To His children today the Lord declares, ‘Be strong, ... and work: for I am with you.’ The Christian always has a strong helper in the Lord. The way of the Lord's helping we may not know; but this we do know: He will never fail those who put their trust in Him. Could Christians realize how many times the Lord has ordered their way, that the purposes of the enemy concerning them might not be accomplished, they would not stumble along complainingly. Their faith would be stayed on God, and no trial would have power to move them. They would acknowledge Him as their wisdom and efficiency, and He would bring to pass that which He desires to work out through them. -Prophets and Kings, p. 76.***

***(My Personal Application): In the light of the above-mentioned truth, I need to continue to practice the presence of God so that the awareness of God’s presence is consciously felt by me.***

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| **Tuesday October 3** | **“The God Who Became One With Us”**  |

***SOP): “From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was ‘the image of God,’ the image of His greatness and majesty, ‘the outshining of his glory.’ It was to manifest this glory that He came to our world. To this sin-darkened earth He came to reveal the light of God's love—to be ‘God with us.’ Therefore, it was prophesied of Him, ‘His name shall be called Immanuel.’”***

***By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God—God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, ‘I have declared unto them thy name’—'merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth’—'that the love wherewith Thou has loved Me may be in them, and I in them.’”***

***-Reflecting Christ, p. 15.***

The Old Testament presents how the Creator began to implement a plan through a people who were supposed to represent His nature and purpose to the world. Everything God did was according to His missionary strategy. Through the prophet Isaiah, God said, “I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning…saying, “My purpose will established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure” *(Isa. 46:9, 10, NASB)*. In the New Testament, however, God’s desire to be with humanity takes a new dimension. Through Christ’s incarnation, what was only a promise in the Garden of Eden *(Gen. 3:15)* becomes a reality.

***Read the narrative of the announcement of Jesus’ birth in Matthew 1:18-23. What essential things does this account tell us about God?***

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| ***Mat 1:18****Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.* ***19****Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.* ***20****But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.* ***21****And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* ***22****Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,* ***23*** *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.* ***20. The angel.*** This was probably Gabriel, who had already appeared to Zacharias (Luke 1:11, 19); and to Mary (see on Luke 1:19). ***In a dream.*** Luke (ch. 1:26–38) implies that the angel appeared to Mary visibly, not in a dream or a vision: he “came in unto her” (v. 28). To Joseph, however, the angel appeared in a dream while he was brooding over the problem that perplexed him. Inspired dreams are one of God’s appointed ways of revealing His will to men (Num. 12:6; Joel 2:28; cf. Gen. 20:3; 31:11, 24; 41:1; etc.) ***Thou son of David.*** Joseph knew, of course, that he was of the royal line. He may even have been heir apparent to the throne of David, as could be implied by Matthew’s genealogy. ***Fear not.*** He was not to hesitate or to question Mary’s virtue. As a “just man” (v. 19) Joseph need have no fear that by taking Mary he would forfeit righteousness. In fact, God required this act of faith. ***Wife.*** Gr. *gunē*, meaning (1) woman in general (chs. 9:20; 13:33; etc.), (2) a wife (chs. 14:3; 18:25), (3) one betrothed (Gen. 29:21, LXX; Deut. 22:23, 24, LXX; cf. Rev. 21:9). Here the third meaning evidently applies.***21. She shall bring forth.*** The angel did not tell Joseph that his “wife” would bear him a son, as he had told Zacharias concerning John (Luke 1:13). Jesus was to be born “the Son of God,” not the son of Joseph (Luke 1:35), but from the moment of Jesus’ birth Joseph was to be as His father. Like other children, Jesus would be benefited by a father’s companionship, guidance, and protection. ***Call his name.*** Joseph was to have the privilege of naming his “Son,” an act usually considered to be the paternal prerogative (see Luke 1:59–63). Mary was also to participate in the naming of Jesus (Luke 1:31). Names of Jewish children were officially bestowed a week after birth, on the child’s eighth day, when the rite of circumcision was performed (Luke 2:21). ***Jesus.*** See on v. 1. ***He shall save.*** The name Jesus means “Jehovah is salvation” (see on v. 1). The word translated “he” is emphatic, as if the angel had said, “For he it is who shall save,” etc... Echoing down through the ages of antiquity had sounded the promise, “Lo, I come” (Ps. 40:7; Zech. 2:10; Heb. 10:7). For centuries the Hebrew people—His people—had waited expectantly for the coming of their Deliverer. Now, “when the fulness of the time was come” (Gal. 4:4), the finger of destiny pointed to the One who was to fulfill these expectations. See on John 1:14. ***From their sins.*** Sin had bound men (Rom. 6:16; 2 Peter 2:19) in its prison house (Isa. 42:7). Christ came that He might loose the bonds, open the prison doors, and deliver the captives from the sentence of death (Isa. 61:1; Rom. 7:24, 25). He came to save us *from* our sins, not *in* our sins. He came, not only to save us from sins actually committed, but from our potential tendencies that lead to sin (Rom. 7:23–5; 1 John 1:7, 9). He came to redeem us from “all iniquity” (Titus 2:14), including every hereditary and cultivated tendency to evil (DA 671).Christ did not come to save His people from the power of Rome, as the Jews fondly hoped, but from the power of a far more formidable foe. He did not come to “restore again the kingdom to Israel” (Acts 1:6), but to restore the dominion of God in the hearts of men (Luke 17:20, 21). Christ did not come primarily to save men from poverty and social injustice (Luke 12:13–15), as many apostles of the social gospel claim today, but from *sin,* the fundamental cause of poverty and injustice. |

***Possible Answers:***

***The essential things that account tells us about God:***

***(1) He is aware of our plans and needs. (vs.20)***

***(2) He can effectively communicate with us.***

***(3) He seeks to help us make sense out of life and most importantly, He not only seeks our good, but He oversees, and is intimately involved (i.e., the prime mover) in the orchestration of His salvationary plans. (vs. 20, 21)***

***(4) He desires to be with us, in us and ultimately save us. (vs. 21, 23)***

***(SOP): His life was one of self-denial and thoughtful care for others. Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He ever bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with the tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save. Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God. It is from the Father's heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men. Jesus, the tender, pitying Saviour, was God “manifest in the flesh.”*** [***1 Timothy 3:16***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.60673)***.***

***But [Christ] great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father's heart a love for man, not to make Him willing to save. No, no! ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.’*** [***John 3:16***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.53318)***. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.’*** [***2 Corinthians 5:19***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.58925)***. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption.”***

***-Steps to Christ, pp. 12, 13.***

“God with us.” Immanuel. God had dwelt among His people within the sanctuary, and now He dwelt with the min the physical person of Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, with the birth of Jesus, God presented in concrete ways His continuous desire to be with us in nature and mission: the Son of God was fully human and fully divine, and He is the One who affirmed,“ “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” *(John 14:6, NKJV)*.

***Read John 1:14-18. What can you learn from Christ’s incarnation about God’s mission to us?***

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| ***Joh 1:14****And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* ***15****John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.****16****And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.* ***17****For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* ***18****No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* ***14. Made flesh.*** Finite understanding halts at the threshold of infinite love, wisdom, and power—baffled and unable to go further. Paul speaks of the incarnation as a great mystery (1 Tim. 3:16). To stray beyond the bounds of what Inspiration has made known is to delve into mysteries the human mind lacks capacity to comprehend. See on John 6:51; 16:28.John has already affirmed the true deity of Christ (see on v. 1), and now affirms His true humanity. Christ is divine in the absolute and unqualified sense of the word; He is also human in the same sense, except that He “knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21). The Scriptures repeatedly and emphatically proclaim this fundamental truth (see Luke 1:35; Rom. 1:3; 8:3; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:6–8; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:2, 8; 2:14–18; 10:5; 1 John 1:2; etc.; see on Phil. 2:6–8; Col. 2:9). Though Christ was originally “in the form of God” He “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself,” and, “being born in the likeness of men,” was “found in human form” (Phil. 2:6–8, RSV). In Him was “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9); nevertheless, “in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren” (Heb. 2:17). “From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father,” but “He chose to give back the scepter into the Father’s hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe,” in order “that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life” (DA 19, 22, 23).The two natures, the divine and the human, were mysteriously blended into one person. Divinity was clothed with humanity, not exchanged for it. In no sense did Christ cease to be God when He became man. The two natures became closely and inseparably one, yet each remained distinct. The human nature was not changed into the divine nature, nor the divine nature into the human. See Additional Note at end of chapter; see on Matt. 1:1; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:6–8; Heb. 2:14–17; see EGW Supplementary Material on John 1:1–3, 14; Mark 16:6; Phil. 2:6–8; Col. 2:9; Heb. 2:14–17.Christ “assumed the liabilities of human nature” (EGW ST Aug. 2, 1905), but His humanity was nevertheless “perfect” (DA 664). Although, as a man, He could have sinned, no taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Him; He had no propensity toward sin (EGW letter 8, 1895, see p. 1128). He was “tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (see on Heb. 4:15). See Additional Note at end of chapter.***Dwelt.*** Gr. *skēnoō*, literally, “tended,” or “pitched [his] tent,” among us (cf. DA 23). Christ became one of us the better to reveal the Father’s love, to share our experiences, to set us an example, to succor us in temptation, to suffer for our sins, and to represent us before the Father (see on Heb. 2:14–17). The eternal Word, who had ever been with the Father (see on John 1:1). was now to become Immanuel, “God with us” (see on Matt. 1:23)... |

***A Possible Answer:***

***What I can learn from Christ’s incarnation about God’s mission to us is that... (see the two sentences below)***

God moved forward with His mission and then, through Jesus Christ, was present in the flesh among His children. The “one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” *(John 1:14, NIV)*., fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and, in accordance with the divine plan, became one with us, God in human flesh. The God of mission was continuing to accomplish His purpose.

***Think what it means that God’s love for us is so great that He would come to us in our own humanity. How should we respond to this love, especially in terms of mission to others?***

***Possible Answers:***

***We should respond to this love, especially in terms of mission to others:***

***(1) With grateful hearts submissively surrendering ourselves to Him for using us in His mission to others.***

***(2) We should accept His love with appreciative hearts.***

***(3) We should honor Him by seeking to replicate His character.***

***(4) We should seek to share in His mission to everyone within the sphere of our influence, the gifts, abilities and opportunities He has granted us.***

***(SOP): It is now time to take a decided stand on the side of truth; and as God has given to every one his measure of influence, he should exert it to the glory of God and for the good of his associates. Not one of the faithful stewards of Christ will be idle in such a time as this, or will be content to live simply for self. Those who are in communion with Christ will realize that there are souls on every side who may be benefited by their help, example, and influence. They will realize that they may be agents through whom Jesus will work to save those for whom He died. Sons and Daughters of God, p. 269.***

***(My Personal Application): I am very appreciative of God sending Himself to the earth in the form of Jesus. In Him I have a Savior, the only reliable divine Example, and the assurance and or guarantee that God’s mission will be realized in my heart and life.***

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| **Wednesday October 4** | **“The God Who Continues to Be With Us”**  |

Jesus’ life and ministry were God’s ultimate revelation. In about three years God was able to reveal more about who He was and what His mission was all about than in all He had down through any other method in previous generations. Christ was the perfect “image of the invisible God,” the One in whom “all the fullness should dwell, …having made peace through the blood of His cross” *(Col 1:15, 19, 20 NKJV)*. In Christ, the missionary nature of God was completely made known. Jesus Himself revealed His mission, Saying, “the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” *(Luke 19:10, NKJV)*.

***Read and carefully reflect on John 3:16. How do you see God’s love and mission interacting here?***

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| ***Joh 3:16****For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*  ***16. God so loved.*** The English word “love” is altogether inadequate to express the depth of solicitous interest expressed by the Greek words *agapē*, “love,” and *agapaō*, “to love” (see on Matt. 5:43). Love is the pre-eminent attribute of the Creator with respect to His creatures. It is the controlling force in divine government. “God is love” (1 John 4:8)... John speaks of himself as “that disciple whom Jesus loved” (ch. 21:7; cf. chs. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:20), that is, loved pre-eminently. The reason was simply that John, more than any of his fellow disciples, submitted to the influence of the perfect life of Jesus and eventually came to understand and reflect the perfection of that life more fully than they (see pp. 891, 892). John was thus better qualified than the other disciples to appreciate the magnitude of divine love and to explain it to his fellow men. This he attempts to do in ch. 3:16—“God *so* loved.” In 1 John 3:1 he exclaims again, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.” Words fail him to express the depth of that eternal, changeless love, and John simply invites men to “behold” it. The supreme expression of divine love is the Father’s gift of His own Son (John 3:16), through whom it becomes possible for us to be “called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1). “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). ***The world.*** Gr. *kosmos*, the world as a created, organized entity (see on Matt. 4:8). God’s love embraces all mankind, but directly benefits only those who respond to it (see on John 1:12). Love requires reciprocity in order to be fully effective. But significantly, God’s love embraces those who reject it as well as those who accept it. None of the lost can accuse God of not loving them. To assert that God has predestined certain persons to be lost irrespective of their own choice in the matter is to say that He hates them. It is to stigmatize Him as unjust and place upon Him the blame for their fate. See Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:19; see on John 3:17–20. ***That he gave.*** Love is genuine only when it is in action. God’s love for sinners led Him to give all that He had for their salvation (see Rom. 5:8). It is the essence of love to sacrifice self for others; selfishness is the antithesis of love. ***His only begotten Son.*** Literally, “his only Son” (see Additional Note on Chapter 1; see on Luke 1:35; John 1:14). ***Whosoever.*** There are no limits to the love of God. There are none to whom He arbitrarily refuses the benefits of saving grace. There is but one condition—belief in, and willing cooperation with, Christ. See on ch. 1:12. It is God’s goodness that leads men to repentance (Rom. 2:4). It is the sunshine of His love that melts hard hearts, brings back the lost, and makes sinners into saints. ***Believeth.*** See on ch. 1:12. ***Perish.*** Gr. *apollumi*, “to utterly destroy,” “to blot out,” “to vanish into nothingness.” “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). The opposite of “everlasting life” is not everlasting misery, but eternal annihilation, everlasting death. Sin has within itself the seeds of dissolution. Death ensues, not simply because God wills it, but because the sinner chooses to separate himself from God, the source of life. ***Everlasting life.*** Gr. *zōē aiōnios*. In John the adjective *aiōnios*, “everlasting,” appears only with the word *zōē*, “life” (chs. 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2, 3). For the meaning of *zōē* see on ch. 1:4, and of *aiōnios*, see on Matt. 25:41. The Greek of John 3:16 reads literally, “might keep on having everlasting life.” “Everlasting life” is life that lasts forever, life that has no end. It becomes possible only through unbroken connection with the Source of all life... In 1 John 5:11 the evangelist stresses the fact that God *has* “given to us eternal life [*zōēn aiōnion*].” The gift of everlasting life was made when God gave the unspeakable gift of His only Son. It is the privilege of the sincere Christian to rejoice that he *has* “everlasting life” *now,* as a gift of God, and “this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11; cf. ch. 3:2). “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12). The possession of everlasting life is conditional upon Christ’s abiding in the heart by faith. He who believes *has* everlasting life, and has “passed from death unto life” (see on John 5:24, 25; 6:54; 8:51). |

***A Possible Answer:***

***I see God’s love and mission interacting in that His love was the causative factor and demonstration at the same time. His love moved Him to act and enabled Him to demonstrate it in ways that are consistent with His nature. Love, as a demonstration of divine altruism and good-will, covered man’s hopelessness and provided salvation from the bondage of sin, the enslavement to self and the dominion of Satan.***

***SOP): Jesus looked upon the world in its fallen state with infinite pity. He took humanity upon Himself that He might touch and elevate humanity. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He reached to the very depth of human misery and woe, to take man as He found him, a being tainted with corruption, degraded with vice, depraved by sin, and united with Satan in apostasy, and elevate him to a seat upon His throne. But it was written of Him that “He shall not fail nor be discouraged,” and He went forth in the path of self-denial and self-sacrifice, giving us an example that we should follow in His steps.***

***We should work as did Jesus, departing from our own pleasure, turning away from Satan's bribes, despising ease, and abhorring selfishness, that we may seek and save that which is lost, bringing souls from darkness into light, into the sunshine of God's love. We have been commissioned to go forth and preach the gospel to every creature. We are to bring to the lost the tidings that Christ can forgive sin, can renew the nature, can clothe the soul in the garments of His righteousness, bring the sinner to His right mind, and teach him and fit him up to be a laborer together with God. -Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 199.***

Later in His ministry, when Jesus approached His last week of life, humanity’s final destiny was at stake. The events that took place during those days connected the expectation from the past with hope for the future. During the Passover celebration –which pointed to freedom from the Egyptian oppression—Jesus Christ, the incarnated God, gave up His life to deliver us form the bondage of sin. The apostle Paul wrote, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God: *(2Cor. 5:21, NIV)*.

***Read Matthew 28:18-20. What is the promise we can find in the Great Commission?***

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| ***Mat 28:18****And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* ***19****Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:* ***20****Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.* ***20. Teaching them.*** The acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ involves the action of the intelligence. Only an intelligent Christian can be a real Christian. Concepts of Christianity that make of conversion and salvation a simple assent to faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour—important though that be—omit a most important part of the gospel commission. It is fully as important to teach men to observe the things Christ has commanded as it is to baptize. In fact, faith in Christ calls for constant growth in “the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Without the exercise of the mental faculties to understand the revealed will of God, there can be no real Christianity, no real growth. Instruction is thus of vital importance before and after baptism. Without adequate instruction in the great vital truths of the gospel, there can be no true religious life. At the same time, it is the wonderful love of Christ that subdues hearts. Without genuine love for Christ the doctrines and forms of religion lose their meaning and value. ***All things.*** Nothing is to be omitted. It is not for man to declare that some of Christ’s teachings are outmoded. ***Whatsoever I have commanded you.*** Human traditions and human requirements are of no value before God. Any teaching that is without the authority of Christ has no place in the Christian church. For comment on the vital distinction Jesus drew between “the commandment of God” and “the tradition of men” see on Mark 7:7, 8, 13. ***I am with you alway.*** At first thought it seems strange that Jesus should make such an announcement as this when He was about to ascend to heaven and be parted, bodily, from His disciples until the day of His return in power and glory. However, by virtue of the gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus would be closer to believers throughout the earth than would be possible had He remained bodily present (see John 16:7). The Scriptures make the presence of Christ real to every humble believer. Through the gift and guidance of the Holy Spirit, every disciple of the Master may find fellowship with Christ as did the disciples of old. ***The end of the world.*** Or, “the end of the age” (see on chs. 13:39; 24:3). From “the foundation of the world” (ch. 25:34) Jesus has been working for the salvation of His people, and He will continue with them till the close of time. |

***A Possible Answer:***

***The promise we find in the Great Commission is that Jesus will be with us (through the Holy Spirit) always, even till the close of time.***

***How does it bring assurance for us as we get involved in God’s mission?***

***A Possible Answer:***

***The way how it brings assurance for us as we get involved in God’s mission is that it soothes and comfort our hearts while motivating us to go forth boldly and confidently. The knowledge that God is with us also means that He identifies with what we are going through at any point in time, that He has already made provisions for the accomplishment of the task at hand, that every emergency is taken into consideration and lastly, that He guarantees our success.***

Christ’s death was part of the reconciliation process, not the end of it. Through His resurrection, Jesus conquered death and received “ ‘all authority…in heaven and on earth’” *(Matt. 28:18, NKJV)*. Based on this reality, He then commissioned all of His followers to make disciples around the world, with an awesome promise: “I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” *(Matt 28:20, NKJV; emphasis supplied).*

***In what ways have you seen Jesus’ promise to be “with you always” being fulfilled in your own life as you are engaged in mission?***

***Possible Answers:***

***The ways I have seen Jesus’ promise to be “with you always” being fulfilled in my own life as I am engaged in mission include:***

***(1) Deliverance from near death in potential accidents on many occasions.***

***(2) Escape from persecution and bodily harm while witnessing in hostile neighborhoods and in foreign countries.***

***(3) His comforting and reassuring presence during times when particular situations were out of my control. (4) Times when His presence was felt during the empowerment of the Spirit of God as I delivered God messages in sermonic or teaching settings.***

***(5) On occasions when I received sad, bitter and potentially discouraging news that would directly impact my ministry to others.***

***(6) When I faced legal rulings/impositions and binding inactions that needed to be confronted and overcome.***

***(7) When I experienced devastating consequences and results in the church’s missionary enterprise.***

***(8) Having the privilege of seeing an outpouring of God’s grace and beneficence in the form of miracles, healing and multiple conversions during evangelistic outreach.***

***SOP): Christ's death proves God's great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him. With the relenting compassion of a father's love, Jehovah looks upon the suffering that His Son endured in order to save the race from eternal death, and accepts us in the Beloved.***

***Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. From it shines the light of the Saviour's love, and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy, for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain.***

***Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”?*** [***Galatians 6:14***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.59552)***. It is our privilege also to glory in the cross, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then, with the light that streams from Calvary shining in our faces, we may go forth to reveal this light to those in darkness. The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 209 , 210.***

***(My Personal Application): Praise God for loving me so much that He would desire to not only be with me but in me. I concede to the fact that on feeling God’s presence from the start of my walk with Jesus, I crave to feel His ongoing presence even more, now. Lord, help me not to be too busy, too preoccupied with the mundane or underappreciate my need to have God be with me at all times and under every circumstance.***

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| **Thursday October 5** | **“The God Who Will Come Back for Us”**  |

***(SOP): As Christ's earthly ministry drew to a close, and He realized that He must soon leave His disciples to carry on the work without His personal supervision, He sought to encourage them and to prepare them for the future. He did not deceive them with false hopes. As an open book He read what was to be. He knew He was about to be separated from them, to leave them as sheep among wolves. He knew that they would suffer persecution, that they would be cast out of the synagogues, and would be thrown into prison. He knew that for witnessing to Him as the Messiah, some of them would suffer death. And something of this He told them. In speaking of their future, He was plain and definite, that in their coming trial they might remember His words and be strengthened to believe in Him as the Redeemer.***

***He spoke to them also words of hope and courage. ‘Let not your heart be troubled,’ He said; ‘ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.’*** [***John 14:1-4***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.54395)***. For your sake I came into the world; for you I have been working. When I go away, I shall still work earnestly for you. I came to the world to reveal Myself to you, that you might believe. I go to My Father and yours to co-operate with Him in your behalf. -The Acts of the Apostles, p. 21.***

***Read John 14:1-3. In what ways is it connected with the end-time message found in the Scriptures?***

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| ***Joh 14:1****Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.* ***2****In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.* ***3****And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.****1. Let not your heart be troubled.*** Or, “stop letting your heart be troubled.” The disciples were troubled because Jesus had announced that He would soon leave them (ch. 13:33). He now proceeded to tell them that His absence would be only temporary, and that His departure would be for their benefit... ***2. My Father’s house.*** A beautiful representation of heaven. The word for “house” (Gr. *oikia*) may also be translated “home.” It is thus rendered in Matt. 8:6. The masculine form, *oikos*, is translated “home” in Mark 5:19; Luke 15:6; 1 Cor. 11:34; 14:35. Jesus was returning to His home. Eventually the disciples would be permitted to join Him there. ***Mansions.*** Gr. *monai* (singular *monē*) literally, “abiding places.” In non-Biblical Greek literature the word sometimes has the meaning of temporary stopping places. From this concept Origen drew his false notion that the mansions were halting places in the soul’s journey to God (see *De Principiis* ii. 11. 6). But such is not the scriptural meaning of *monai*. This is clear from v. 23, the only other occurrence of the word in the Bible. Certainly the abode of Christ and the Father with the Christian is no temporary affair. The idea of permanence in *monē* is reflected in 1 Macc. 7:38, the only occurrence of the word in the LXX.Our English word “mansion” is from the Latin *mansio*, in meaning almost equivalent to the Gr. *monē*. *Mansio*, as does *monē*, means “a remaining place,” “a place of abode.” The idea of a building of some size or pretentiousness does not attach to the Latin, nor, of course, to the Greek. That idea was a later development of the English word and the meaning should not be introduced into the present verse. Either “mansion” should be understood in its archaic sense of “a dwelling place,” or “abode,” or one of these meanings should be substituted in a translation of the verse... The fact that there are “many” dwelling places makes certain of sufficient room in the Father’s house for all who heed the Father’s invitation. ***I go.*** Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the insertion before “I go” of the Greek conjunction *hoti*, meaning, “for,” “that,” or “because.”... These words were designed to comfort the disciples. Jesus was leaving, but He would not forget them. He would eagerly anticipate His reunion with them in the Father’s house. In the interval He would prepare for the glorious home-coming. ***3. If I go.*** This conditional clause was not intended to introduce an uncertainty. The word translated “if” (*ean*) here has temporal force, and should probably be translated “when,” as in 1 Cor. 14:16; 1 John 3:2. ***I will come again.*** The Greek expresses this promise in the present tense. This so-called futuristic present gives emphasis to the certainty of the event. The event is thought of as being so certain as to be already taking place. The reference is clearly to the personal advent of Jesus vividly described a few days earlier in answer to the question, “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (see on Matt. 24:1–3; see vs. 30, 31). ***Receive.*** Gr. *paralambanō*, literally, “to receive to the side of” (see on Matt. 24:40). ***Where I am.*** The disciples were directed to the time of the second advent as the moment when they would be reunited with their Lord. There is no hint here of the popular doctrine that believers go to be with their Lord at the time of death. Nor is this doctrine upheld elsewhere in the Scriptures. Paul also directed the attention of believers to the time of the second advent as the moment of grand reunion (1 Thess. 4:16, 17)... Jesus has gone to His Father’s house. He is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When His image shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come (COL 69). It is our privilege to hasten the day of glorious home-coming (2 Peter. 3:12; cf. DA 633, 634; COL 69). |

***Possible Answers:***

***Ways in which Jesus’s reassuring promise is connected with the end-time message found in the Scriptures:***

***(1) Finalization of His mission on earth***

***(1) Sin will be no more***

***(2) God’s intention of being with us is realized.***

***SOP): As Christ ascended, His hands outstretched to bless His disciples, a cloud of angels received Him and hid Him from their sight. As the disciples looked with straining eyes for the last glimpse of their ascending Lord, two angels from the rejoicing throng stood by them and said, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (***[***Acts 1:11***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.54934)***).***

***The disciples were filled with great joy. Over and over again they repeated the words Christ had spoken to them in His last lessons, as recorded in the*** [***fourteenth***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.54395)***,*** [***fifteenth***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.54458)***,*** [***sixteenth***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.54513)***, and*** [***seventeenth chapters of John***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.54580)***; and every one had something to say about the instruction, especially with regard to the words of the fourteenth of John ... [***[***verses 1-3***](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwhene%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRK7FAYE%5C1965.54395)***, quoted]. The promise that He would come again, and also the thought that He had left them His peace, filled their hearts with joy. -The Upward Look, p. 357.***

During His early ministry, one of Christ’s most precious promises, the blessed hope, reflects once again the Creator’s desire to be with us for eternity. Jesus affirmed, “ ‘I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am’ ” *( John 14:3, NIV; emphasis added).*

According to the apostle John, the promise will finally become reality. “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God” *(Rev. 21:3, NKJV)*.

“The work of redemptions will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God’s grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be no only ransomed but exalted… Here, where the Son of God tabernacle in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died, --here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men…And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift, --Immanuel, ‘God with us.’” –Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 26.

Here we find the most beautiful picture of Redemption. The God of mission will finally fulfill His desire to be with His children eternally. What a tremendous privilege to be part of this reality!

**Weekly Challenge.** Throughout this quarter you will be invited to engage intentionally in God’s mission. This will be an opportunity to see and experience the God of mission at work in your life. Take advantage of this moment for personal reflection and be ready to share what you have learned with your class on a weekly basis. Additionally, the Challenge Up will encourage you to increase your involvement in God’s mission.

***Challenge:***

***Pray every day of the coming week for God to open your heart to be part of His mission.***

***Challenge Up:***

***Learn the name of someone in your life you don’t already know—a neighbor, coworker, shopkeeper, bus driver, janitor, etc. Begin praying for him or her each day.***

***(SOP): It is our privilege to understand the great responsibilities that God has placed upon us so that we shall not be in darkness as to what is coming upon our world. We cannot afford to meet that day without a preparation. But when we think of this great and solemn event of Christ's coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, we should live in great humiliation before God lest we fail of the grace of God and prove ourselves unworthy of eternal life. -The Upward Look, p. 192.***

***(My Personal Application): In that I am a child of God, I identify with my Father’s mission and humbly open my heart and accept the challenge to participate in His mission.***

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| **Friday September 22** | **“Further Study”**  |

“The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of ‘the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.’ Romans 16:25, R.V. …It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only begotten Son, ‘that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16 – Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 22.

“Christ did not tell His disciples that their work would be easy…But they would not be left to fight alone. He assured them that He would be with them; and that if they would go forth in faith, they should move under the shield of Omnipotence. … So long as they obeyed His word, and worked in connection with Him they could not fail. Go to all nations, He bade them. Go to the farthest part of the habitable globe and be assured that my presence will be with you even there. Labor in faith and confidence; for the time will never come when I will forsake you. I will be with you always helping you to perform your duty, guiding, comforting, sanctifying, sustaining you, giving you success in speaking words that shall draw the attention of others to heaven.” –Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 29.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Think about what it means that God’s first words to fallen humanity were not “What have you done?” Or “Why have you disobeyed Me?” Instead, the first words were, “Where are you?” “What comfort should this truth give us regarding God’s intention for us and our loved ones?
2. Think about what it means that God Himself, in the person of Jesus, came to this world in order to save us. Christ on the cross was the ultimate manifestation of God as a God of mission.? What does this tell us about His character?
3. The mission belongs to God. Therefore, He will equip and empower people for the task. In light of this reality, when you look at the challenges of worldwide evangelization, how can you deal with feelings and attitudes of inadequacy of fear?



***Your Support for This Ministry is Indispensable.***

***Experience the Blessing.***

1. Francis D. Nichol, ed., [*The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/iv-vol1?ref=Bible.Ge3.9), vol. 1 (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978), 231–232. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)