

## 1. The Bible

• “For the countless millions all over the globe who turn to it every day and in their times of need, the Bible provides the sub-text for how we deal with life and death and how we define our deepest hopes.” Jaroslav Pelikan, *Whose Bible Is It?*, 225, 226.

The entire Bible, • Old and New Testaments, is a revelation of the character of God, given to us with the distinct, inspired purpose of leading us to Jesus<sup>1</sup> and forming us into His image.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 These stories are recorded so “that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:30).**
- 1 “The revelation of Jesus Christ...” (Revelation 1:1).**
- 2 “There’s nothing like the written Word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God’s way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us” (2 Timothy 3:15, 16, The Message).**

## 2. The Trinity

• “The doctrine of the trinity is one of those areas where faith affirms what reason cannot totally comprehend. Some people are tempted to dismiss the idea as a theological word game unworthy of serious thought. But its formulators weren’t playing games. They were trying to safeguard the essential Christian experience of God.” Richard Rice, *The Reign of God*, 92,

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons, •<sup>1</sup> with no beginning and no end,<sup>2</sup> all-powerful, all-wise,<sup>3</sup> always present with us,<sup>4</sup> forever worthy of our worship.<sup>5</sup>

- 1 “Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness” (Revelation 1:4, 5).**
- 2 “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty’” (Revelation 1:8).**
- 3 “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called**

you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come” (Ephesians 1:17-21).

<sup>4</sup> “Be strong and courageous... for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6).

<sup>5</sup> “I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, ‘Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!’” (Revelation 22:8, 9).

### 3. God, the Father

• Isaiah “brings us into a participating awareness of what (the word *gospel*) proclaims... It is a word that contains a message: the news that God acts, not only *is* but *is acting*—right now.” Eugene Peterson, *The Jesus Way*, 161.

God the eternal Father is the Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation.<sup>1</sup> He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it... The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing” (Deuteronomy 10:14-18).

<sup>2</sup> “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

<sup>2</sup> Jesus said, “To see me is to see the Father” (John 14:9).

#### 4. God, the Son

• “In all these revelations of the divine presence the glory of God was manifested through Christ. Not alone at the Savior’s advent, but through all the ages after the Fall and the promise of redemption, ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.’”  
Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 366.

Through God the eternal Son<sup>1</sup> all things on this planet were created<sup>2</sup> and communication was established between divinity and humanity. • Then the Son “became flesh” and lived among us.<sup>3</sup> In Jesus the character of God is lovingly revealed and the salvation of humanity is fully accomplished.<sup>4</sup> He will come again in glory as Lord of Lords and King of Kings for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things.

- 1 “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word” (Hebrews 1:3).**
- 2 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:1-3).**
- 3 “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).**
- 4 “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:17).**

#### 5. God, the Holy Spirit

• “O holy Dove of God descending, You are the love that knows no ending. All of our shattered dreams You’re mending: Spirit, now live in me.

“O holy Rain of God now falling, You make the Word of God enthralling, You are that inner voice now call-

God the eternal Spirit<sup>1</sup> was active with the Father and the Son in Creation (Genesis 1:1), with Jesus during His life here on earth (Matthew 3:16), and remains active with us in our redemption today. •<sup>2</sup> He gives spiritual gifts to the church (1 Corinthians 12:4-11), empowers it to bear witness to Christ,<sup>3</sup> and leads us into all truth.<sup>4</sup>

- 1 “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14).**
- 2 “It is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Corinthians 1:21, 22).**

ing: Spirit, now  
live in me.

“O holy Flame  
of God now  
burning, You  
are the power of  
Christ return-  
ing. You are the  
answer to our  
yearning: Spirit,  
now live in me.”

Bryan Leech,  
1976, *Seventh-  
day Adventist  
Hymnal*, #270.

<sup>2</sup> “You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

<sup>3</sup> “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22, 23).

<sup>4</sup> “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

## 6. Creation

• “The doctrine of creation leads to the idea of human *stewardship of the creation*, which is to be contrasted with a secular notion of human *ownership of the world*.” Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 299.

At the beginning of earth’s history (Genesis 1:1), it was Jesus who did all the work of creation (John 1:1-3),<sup>1</sup> and who gave His work as a gift to humanity.<sup>2</sup>

• When creation was finished it was pronounced “very good” (Genesis 1 and 2). The inhabitants of the universe find in the creative act their reason for worship.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth... For he spoke, and it came to be, he commanded, and it stood firm” (Psalm 33:6, 9).

<sup>1</sup> “All things were created by him” (Colossians 1:16).

<sup>2</sup> “This is what God the Lord says—he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: ‘I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness” (Isaiah 42:5, 6).

<sup>3</sup> “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” (Revelation 4:11).

## 7. The Nature of Humanity

• “It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen, and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God.”  
Ellen White,  
*Steps to Christ*,  
62

At the conclusion of the Bible’s creation story, the first humans are made in the image of God, given dominion over the world, and charged with the responsibility to care for it. But Adam and Eve, who were created with an unforced freedom to make their own choices, disobeyed, ran away, and tried to hide from God, and, as a result of their choice, became mortal. We, their descendants, share this fallen nature and its consequences.<sup>1</sup> •

<sup>1</sup> “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away” (Romans 3:10, 11).

<sup>1</sup> “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

<sup>1</sup> “We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants the prophets... We have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth” (Daniel 9:5, 6, 13).

<sup>1</sup> “Our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens. From the days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great... Here we are before you in our guilt, though because of it not one of us can stand in your presence” (Ezra 9:6, 7, 15).

## 8. The Great Controversy

• “The great controversy is ended... From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things,

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, and the nature of God’s government. The conflict began in heaven when Lucifer, an unfallen angel, openly rebelled against God.<sup>1</sup> This world became the arena of the universal conflict,<sup>2</sup> and ultimately will be the scene of the triumph of God’s grace and the vindication of God’s character with the victorious return of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> •

<sup>1</sup> “And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—

animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.” Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, 678.

### 9. The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus

• “Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.” Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, 25.

**that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him” (Revelation 12:7-9).**

- 2 “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15).**
- 3 “Trouble will not come a second time” (Nahum 1:9).**

**A**s the earth grew dark through misapprehension of God, Christ voluntarily entered this world to live on earth subject to all the forces of humanity to which we today are subjected.<sup>1</sup> Through His life, ministry, teaching, suffering, and dying in our behalf, • Jesus demonstrated the fullness of God’s perfect love for us.<sup>2</sup> By His resurrection Christ proclaims the ultimate triumph over all the forces of evil.<sup>3</sup>

- 1 “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:3-5).**
- 2 “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).**
- 3 “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die’” (John 11:25, 26).**

### 10. The Experience of Salvation

• “The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world... 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.” Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, June 12, 1901.

• “If you would gather together everything that is good and holy and noble and lovely in man and then present the subject to the angels of God as acting a part in the salvation of the human soul or in merit, the proposition would be rejected as treason.” Ellen White, *Faith and Works*, 24 (MS 36, 1890).

• “This is the good news for sinners: God’s redemptive action in His Son, originated and

The fallen nature of humanity makes it impossible for us to earn, deserve or merit eternal salvation.<sup>1</sup> And so, in infinite love and mercy, God, in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit, pursued guilty sinners from the Garden of Eden to this very moment.<sup>2</sup> Hanging on the cross of Calvary, Jesus embraces sinners, declaring to them the reality of “the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world” • (Matthew 25:34).<sup>3</sup>

Christ’s perfect atonement, vindicating the righteousness of God’s character and refuting the accusations of Satan, is the only basis for our confidence in eternal life.<sup>4</sup> Nothing we can do, no amount of obeying, overcoming, or becoming sanctified, in any way contributes to or merits our salvation.<sup>5</sup> The everlasting gospel<sup>6</sup> is the good news that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone. •<sup>7</sup>

**1 The disciples asked, “Who then can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible’” (Matthew 19:25, 26).**

**2 “I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, ‘Here am I, here am I!’” (Isaiah 65:1).**

**3 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace” (Ephesians 1:3-7).**

**4 “My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation” (Psalm 62:1, 2).**

planned by God as expressions of His everlasting love and power... giving man that which he could never provide for himself: salvation, redemption, transformation, and reconciliation with God.” Edward Heppenstall, *Salvation Unlimited*, 35.

<sup>5</sup> “Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:4-9).

<sup>6</sup> “God has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:9, 10).

<sup>6</sup> “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

<sup>7</sup> “He who has the Son has life” (1 John 5:12).

### 11. Growing in Christ

• “Being precedes action.” Paul Tillich, *Morality and Beyond*, 14.

• “True disciples keep the Law not in a *quid-pro-quo* attempt to get something in return but simply as a natural, gracious, lovely

Since we have been justified by Christ and now are at peace with God • (Romans 5:1),<sup>1</sup> we respond • to God’s grace in worship; growing toward the likeness of Christ’s character, communing with Him in prayer, learning more about Him from studying His Word and meditating on His providence. We reflect God’s grace in our relationships with others. We reveal God’s grace through lives of service. Jesus’ victory<sup>2</sup> gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us,<sup>3</sup> as we daily walk with Him in the joyful assurance of His love.

<sup>1</sup> “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God who reconciled us to himself

result of God's saving activity in Christ. Once you are a citizen in God's kingdom by God's grace you quite naturally act distinctively." Scott Hoezee, *The Riddle of Grace*, 35, 36.

• "Discipleship is merely the life that springs from grace." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 63.

through Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

- <sup>1</sup> "Neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared, "Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:11).
- <sup>2</sup> "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me... and the whole world will know that... it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands" (1 Samuel 17:45-47).
- <sup>3</sup> "Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

## 12. The Church

• "We do not believe that we alone constitute the true children of God... on earth today. We believe that God has a multitude of earnest, faithful, sincere followers in all... communions, who are true witnesses of the living God in our age... We would say with all the earnestness and directness we

In addition to being one's local family of faith<sup>1</sup> and a worldwide community of believers who share similar understandings in doctrine and practice,<sup>2</sup> God's church on earth is comprised of all those chosen by the pursuing love of our Heavenly Parent.<sup>3</sup> The church, responding to the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31) and "growing in grace" (2 Peter 3:18) is the "body of Christ" in the world today • (Colossians 1:24). In continuity with people of God in all times and in all places, the church has been set apart by God for the holy purpose of embodying and reflecting God's grace,<sup>4</sup> • declaring "the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9, 10).<sup>5</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> "Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

can command, that we repudiate any implication that we alone are beloved of God and have a claim upon heaven.”

*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 187, 196.

- “The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 26,

- <sup>2</sup> “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need” (Acts 2:44-47).
- <sup>3</sup> “You are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you” (Deuteronomy 7:6-8).
- <sup>4</sup> “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:12-17).
- <sup>5</sup> “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches” (Revelation 22:16).

### 13. The Remnant and Its Mission

• “... the last-day appearance and fulfillment of the prophesied emphasis characterizing the everlasting gospel, in the closing segment of its witness to the world” (LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 543).

• “Clad in the armor of Christ’s righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict.” Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, 725.

In every epoch of biblical history, there has been a group of people who are the last of the era, the remaining few, the *remnant*.<sup>1</sup> Like all of us who “have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), the remnant stand in need of God’s grace.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of earth’s history God sets apart another remnant<sup>3</sup> and gives them a specific mission: to give God glory,<sup>4</sup> to follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4), to proclaim the everlasting gospel of salvation by grace alone,<sup>5</sup> • and to herald the nearness of the Second Coming of Christ (Revelation 14:6-12). •

<sup>1</sup> Joseph said, “God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance” (Genesis 45:7).

<sup>1</sup> Nebuchadnezzar “carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword” (2 Chronicles 36:20).

<sup>2</sup> “From the days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today. But now, for a brief moment, the Lord our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage... What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, you have punished us less than our sins have deserved and have given us a remnant like this” (Ezra 9:7-9, 13).

<sup>3</sup> “Out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this” (Isaiah 37:31, 32).

<sup>4</sup> “They will proclaim my glory among the nations” (Isaiah 66:19).

- <sup>5</sup> “So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace” (Romans 11:5, 6).

#### 14. Unity in the Body of Christ

• “It was Christ who crossed every boundary, broke down every barrier. He crossed the boundaries of class by eating with the outcasts. He crossed boundary of nations by pointing to a Samaritan as the agent of God’s will. He transgressed religious boundaries by claiming the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. Everywhere he manifested his freedom and called others to theirs, calling them forth from family, national, and religious loyalties to loyalty to the world at large.” William Sloan Coffin, *Credo*, 138.

The church is one body with many members,<sup>1</sup> called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (Revelation 14:6). Reflecting the character of God, we treat all people with respect;<sup>2</sup> distinctions, including those of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. • We are all equal in Christ,<sup>3</sup> who by one Spirit has bonded us into one community,<sup>4</sup> with Him and with one another.<sup>5</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:4, 5).

- <sup>2</sup> “Judge carefully, for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery” (2 Chronicles 19:7).

- <sup>3</sup> “In Christ’s family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ” (Galatians 3:28, *The Message*).

- <sup>4</sup> “Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all” Colossians 3:11).

- <sup>5</sup> “Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing” (1 Peter 3:8, 9).

## 15. Baptism

• “Christian baptism is the sacrament of *invitation* into the Christian life. It marks the beginning of the journey of faith and discipleship that lasts throughout one’s life.” Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 214.

• “On the subjective side, baptism signifies a new orientation in a person’s life. With baptism, we are no longer in bondage to sin; we have the freedom of life in the Spirit. The repentance which accompanies baptism involves turning away from earlier values and behavior patterns and acquiring a new style of life.” Richard Rice, *The Reign of God*, 300.

Recognizing our desire to live an abundant life centered on Jesus, we confess that, instead, we have disobeyed, run away from God, and tried to hide from Him.<sup>1</sup> We repent of this course of action<sup>2</sup> and, through baptism, • publicly testify that it is only Jesus, the Lamb of God, who can take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Our baptism by immersion in water is a symbol of the fullness of God’s saving power,<sup>3</sup> and of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Mark 1:7,8), which is essential to us as we enter life after baptism in recognition of the higher calling of Christian behavior. •<sup>4</sup>

1 “Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River” (Mark 1:5).

2 “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus. On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:4, 5).

3 “... having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:12).

4 “John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him... ‘Produce fruit in keeping with repentance...’ ‘What should we do then?’ the crowd asked. John answered, ‘The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.’ Tax collectors also came to be baptized. ‘Teacher,’ they asked, ‘what should we do?’ ‘Don’t collect any more than you are required to,’ he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, ‘And what should we do?’ He replied, ‘Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay’” (Luke 3:7-14).

## 16. The Lord's Supper

• “The Communion service was not to be a season of sorrowing. This was not its purpose. As the Lord’s disciples gather about His table, they are not to remember and lament their shortcomings. They are not to dwell upon their past religious experience, whether that experience has been elevating or depressing. They are not to recall the differences between them and their brethren. The preparatory service has embraced all this. The self-examination, the confession of sin, the reconciling of differences, has all been done. Now they come to meet with Christ. They are not to stand in the shadow of the cross, but in its saving light.”

Ellen White,  
*The Desire of Ages*, 659.

To keep afresh the memory<sup>1</sup> and appreciation of what God, in Jesus, accomplished on the Cross,<sup>2</sup> we celebrate the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. We recall the last meal Jesus ate with His disciples (Mark 14:12-26), we personalize the rich salvation symbolism He taught us,<sup>3</sup> and we are energized<sup>4</sup> to continue living lives that call attention to what Jesus has done.<sup>5</sup>

In preparation for the Supper we thank God for His gift of reconciliation through Jesus (Romans 5:11), and we follow Christ’s example in the service of foot washing (John 13:1-17). •

1 “The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me’” (1 Corinthians 11:23-25).

2 “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [His Son], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross” (Colossians 1:19, 20).

3 “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

4 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” (Hebrews 12:2, 3).

5 “Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

## 17. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

• “Unity does not mean uniformity, and therefore, within the church, there are differing gifts and differing functions; but every one of them is a gift of the same Spirit, and every one of them is designed, not for the glory of the individual member of the Church, but for the good of the whole.” William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, 120.

• “All disciples are spiritually equipped. In first-century Palestine, there were no other distinctions! Personal faith focused on Jesus was the only criteria. That distinction led organically into an active discipleship infused with the Spirit, specifically and variously gifted for ministry.” Halcyon Wilson, in *The Welcome Table*, 188.

Within the church, “we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:4, 5). • In accordance with this reality, different spiritual gifts<sup>1</sup> and ministries are given to each of us • by the Holy Spirit<sup>2</sup> for specific purposes: to prepare God’s people for service, to deepen our experience with Jesus, and to help us in the maturing process of Christian growth.<sup>3</sup> All our gifts and ministries are to glorify Jesus and bring praise and honor to Him.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us” (Romans 12:6).

<sup>2</sup> “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines” (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

<sup>3</sup> “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-15).

- <sup>4</sup> “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 4:10, 11).

### 18. The Gift of Prophecy

• “The prophetic gift is alive and well wherever God’s people are listening.”  
Ruben Escalante, in *A Reason to Believe*, 20.

• “The ministry of Ellen White does not define, control, or restrict an Adventist understanding of scripture. That is, what she wrote does not determine in advance the results of Adventist scriptural exegesis; nor did she ever intend her work to be so used.” Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 123, 124.

• “The revival of any, or all of the gifts, will never supersede the necessity of searching the Word to learn the truth.”  
James White, *The Gifts: Their Objects*, 27.

The identifying mark of the spiritual gift of prophecy, like all the other gifts, is that it directs our attention to Jesus: to testify of Jesus is the spirit that motivates all prophecy (Revelation 19:10).

We see this gift manifested throughout the biblical record,<sup>1</sup> and to the end of earth’s history, including in the ministry of Ellen White. • We find her writings to be a continuing source of inspiration, counseling us to keep our eyes on Jesus,<sup>2</sup> providing guidance, instruction, and correction, and making clear to us that the Bible is the standard by which all truth and experience must be tested. •<sup>3</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28, 29).

- <sup>2</sup> “For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord” (2 Corinthians 4:5).

- <sup>3</sup> “The prophetic Word was confirmed to us. You’ll do well to keep focusing on it. It’s the one light you have in a dark time as you wait for daybreak and the rising of the Morning Star in your hearts. The main thing to keep in mind here is that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of private opinion. And why? Because it’s not something concocted in the human heart. Prophecy resulted when the Holy Spirit prompted men and women to speak God’s Word” (2 Peter 1:19-21, *The Message*).

### 19. The Law of God

• “The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been, – just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents, – perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized. It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy we cannot perfectly obey the holy law... But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amidst trials and temptation such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins

The foundational principles of God’s character and government are embodied in the perfect law of God.<sup>1</sup> The law expresses God’s loving will and purpose for our individual relationship with Him and for our relationships with others.<sup>2</sup> These precepts, clearly revealed in every age and to all people,<sup>3</sup> have highlighted the inability of the human heart to render perfect obedience to the perfect law.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, God’s law remains the standard of judgment.<sup>5</sup> Failing in all our endeavors to obtain perfect righteousness by obeying the law,<sup>6</sup> we gratefully accept that the law drives us to Jesus, where God’s plan of salvation is revealed, and we are saved, justified, by grace alone.<sup>7</sup> •

- <sup>1</sup> **“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes” (Psalm 19:7, 8).**
- <sup>2</sup> **“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:37-40).**
- <sup>3</sup> **“I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws” (Ezekiel 20:11).**
- <sup>4</sup> **“We have not obeyed the Lord our God” (Daniel 9:10).**
- <sup>4</sup> **“You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?” (Romans 2:21-23).**

and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him and accept Him as your Savior, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned." Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, 62.

- 4 "The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so" (Romans 8:7).**
- 5 "Jesus replied... 'If you want to enter life, obey the commandments'" (Matthew 19:17).**
- 6 "No one will be declared righteous in [God's] sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin" (Romans 3:20).**
- 7 "The law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24).**

## 20. The Sabbath

• "The Sabbath brings heaven to earth and is a reminder of the Paradise home that was lost through sin. It is also a pledge of the Paradise to be restored through Christ." Taylor Bunch, *The Ten Commandments*, 78.

• "The Sabbath functions theologically as an affirmation of human dignity, equality, and freedom, and at the same time as a radical protest against such diverse distortions of humanness as narcissism, consumerism, and every form of totalitarianism."

At the beginning of life on planet Earth, our Creator blessed the seventh-day<sup>1</sup> and commanded us to remember the holiness of the day, the Sabbath.<sup>2</sup> God took it upon Himself to teach His people how to honor the Sabbath (see Exodus 16; Nehemiah 13) helping them understand how to rest on this set-apart day. The Sabbath invites us to testify that God is the Lord,<sup>3</sup> and that He alone can make us holy, just like He makes the Sabbath holy.<sup>4</sup> •

While He was here on earth, it was Jesus' custom to worship<sup>5</sup> on the Sabbath (see Luke 6:6-11; John 5:1-13). He proclaimed Himself Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8) and invited us to find in Him our rest.<sup>6</sup> •

The Sabbath remains a symbol of our redemption in Christ,<sup>7</sup> and a foretaste of our joyful future with Jesus in God's eternal kingdom.<sup>8</sup> •

- 1 "God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done" Genesis 2:3).**
- 2 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made**

Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 104.

• “The Sabbath is not an earthbound tradition. The Bible makes it clear that when the history of this planet is over, the redeemed will continue to worship God every Sabbath in heaven. This intriguing passage in Isaiah (66:22, 23) points out... that the Sabbath is not a man-made institution, tied to one culture or ethnic group or period of time. It’s an eternal worship principle, a gift from God that we’ll still be enjoying ten million years from now.” Stuart Tyner, *Walking On the Edge*, 39.

**the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Exodus 20:8-11).**

- 3 “Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God” (Ezekiel 20:20).**
- 4 “Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy” (Ezekiel 20:12).**
- 5 “He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read” (Luke 4:16).**
- 6 “Come unto me... and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28-30).**
- 7 “There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his” (Hebrews 4:9, 10).**
- 8 “As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,’ declares the Lord, ‘so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me’” (Isaiah 66:22, 23).**

## 21. Stewardship

• “Giving is an act of worship, a rightful response to a contemplation of Calvary.” John Phillips, *Exploring Genesis*, 130.

**W**e are God’s stewards, entrusted by Him with time, opportunities, abilities, possessions, and all the blessings of the earth. We acknowledge God’s ownership of each of these resources<sup>1</sup> by fulfilling our responsibilities to Him for their proper use, by faithfully serving Him and others, and by returning tithes<sup>2</sup> and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. •

Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God that overcomes selfishness and covetousness, and produces

- “The call of God is upon us to use money within the confines of a properly disciplined spiritual life and to manage money for the good of all humanity and for the glory of God... Resources are channeled into life-giving ministry. The helpless are helped. Projects that advance Christ’s kingdom are financed. Great good is accomplished.”  
Richard Foster, *The Challenge of the Disciplined Life*, 46.
- joy for the blessings that come to others as a result. •<sup>3</sup>
- 1 “Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand” (1 Chronicles 29:14).**
  - 2 “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it’” (Malachi 3:10).**
  - 3 “We want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints” (2 Corinthians 8:1-3).**

## 22. Christian Behavior

- “There are many who try to correct the life of others by attacking what they consider are wrong habits... Those who seek to correct others should present the attractions of Jesus... Talk of Christ, and when the heart is converted, everything that is out of harmony with the Word of God will drop off.”  
Ellen White, *Evangelism*, 272
- Acknowledging all God has done and is doing for us in Jesus, we respond in worship,<sup>1</sup> not just by what we say, but by living lives that seek to imitate Christ’s own goodness, purity, and holiness,<sup>2</sup> • and by this example to invite others to glorify our Heavenly Father.<sup>3</sup>
- Such behavior begins when we confess that God knows what is best for His children,<sup>4</sup> and we ask God to work His good will in us,<sup>5</sup> to create in us a mind dramatically different from the world in which we live.<sup>6</sup> • This new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) is seen in “the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit” (1 Peter 3:4) with others.<sup>7</sup> • It extends to the type of citizens we are in our world.<sup>8</sup> It expands through all the dynamics of our lives—mental, physical, social, spiritual—until whatever we do, we do “for the glory of God.”<sup>9</sup>
- 1 “I urge you, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship” (Romans 12:1).**

• “The problem is not outward things. The problem is having and then acting upon, the right world view—the world view which gives men and women the truth of what is.” Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live*, 254.

• “In home after home I have seen Jesus change beer into furniture, sinners into saints, hate-filled relations into loving ones, cowardice into courage, the fatigue of despair into the buoyancy of hope. In instance after instance, life after life, I have seen Christ be ‘God’s power unto salvation,’ and that’s miracle enough for me.” William Sloan Coffin, *Credo*, 10.

• “The ability to accept God’s unconditional grace and ferocious love is all the fuel we need to obey Him in return.” Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz*, 86.

- <sup>2</sup> “Be imitators of God, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:1, 2).
- <sup>3</sup> “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).
- <sup>4</sup> “Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess” (Deuteronomy 5:33).
- <sup>5</sup> “Create in me a pure heart” (Psalm 51:10).
- <sup>6</sup> “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2).
- <sup>6</sup> “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8).
- <sup>7</sup> “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” (Colossians 3:12-14).
- <sup>8</sup> “Rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong” (Romans 13:3).
- <sup>9</sup> “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

### 23. Marriage and the Family

• “The number one need in all people, including you and your partner, is the need for acceptance... The need for acceptance is so profound that I would venture to say that most, if not all, issues that cause conflict in a relationship ultimately come down to one or both partners feeling rejected—and, in turn, wanting to feel accepted.”  
Phillip McGraw, *Relationship Rescue*, 100.

• “Remember that marriage is a humbling journey. When one sinner marries another sinner, there is always going to be trouble.” Jim Burns, *Creating an Intimate Marriage*, 30.

• “The family is the most powerful institution in promoting faith in youth.” Merton Strommen, *Passing On the Faith*, 304.

• “Children need a firm moral center.”  
Robert Shaw, *The Epidemic*, 9.

An ideal marriage, as envisioned in the Bible, is a union<sup>1</sup> of mutual attraction,<sup>2</sup> friendship,<sup>3</sup> love,<sup>4</sup> respect, acceptance,<sup>•</sup> and responsibility which elucidates the love, sanctity, closeness, acceptance, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church.<sup>5</sup>

Because of this comparison between marriage and our relationship with Jesus and the powerful spiritual statement a happy marriage can make, we strive to enter marriage with every possible advantage, to make our marriage commitment inviolable, and to continue growing in love throughout the course of a lifetime together.<sup>6</sup> •

The Christian family • is the primary school in which our children learn grace, worship, community, and service. In example, instruction, and discipline parents are to reflect the character and government of God.<sup>7</sup> •

- <sup>1</sup> “A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).
- <sup>2</sup> “How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful!... How handsome you are, my lover! Oh, how charming!” (Song of Solomon 1:15, 16).
- <sup>3</sup> “This is my lover, this my friend” (Song of Solomon 5:16).
- <sup>4</sup> “Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her” (Genesis 24:67).
- <sup>5</sup> “This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” (Ephesians 5:32, 33).
- <sup>6</sup> “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21).
- <sup>7</sup> “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:7).

### 24. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

• “The message of the sanctuary was a message of salvation... God used its services to proclaim the gospel. Through symbol and ritual God purposed by means of this gospel-parable to focus the faith of Israel upon the sacrifice and priestly ministry of the world's Redeemer. Like a story, this ritual parable of redemption was told and retold year after year” *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 349, 350.

• “This new insight into Christ's heavenly ministry... is simply the last-day appearance and fulfillment of the prophesied emphasis characterizing the everlasting gospel, in the closing segment of its witness to the world” LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 543.

The earthly sanctuary (see Deuteronomy 25-40) was built on a pattern of the heavenly sanctuary,<sup>1</sup> “the true tabernacle.”<sup>2</sup> Once a year in the Old Testament sanctuary service, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place to “make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the people of the community” (Leviticus 16:33). Thus the finished work of salvation, promised in heaven before the creation of the world,<sup>3</sup> is illustrated for us in the earthly tabernacle. •

Now salvation is pictured for us once more, this time in the Most Holy Place of *heaven*, where Jesus has gone “before us,” “ahead of us,” into the very presence of God, not only interceding for us,<sup>4</sup> but also inviting us to join Him there,<sup>5</sup> encouraging us and assuring us that our hope in Him is “firm and secure.”<sup>6</sup>

At this time in earth's history we are called to “hold unswervingly”<sup>7</sup> to our hope in salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. •

**1 “Make this tabernacle exactly like the pattern I will show you” (Deuteronomy 25:9).**

**2 “We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man” (Hebrews 8:1, 2).**

**3 “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time” (Titus 1:1, 2).**

**4 “He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them” (Hebrews 7:25).**

**6 “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).**

- <sup>7</sup>“Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever” (Hebrews 6:17-20).
- <sup>8</sup>“Since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain that is, His body... Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:19, 20, 23).

### 25. The Second Coming of Christ

• “It’s not because of *our* righteousness that Jesus comes back. The contemporary current against which we struggle is filled with sloth, lust, egoism, and deception. First Peter, chapter 2 describes the ‘chosen people’—the elect—as those who ‘have received mercy.’ The conclusion of the song of Moses and the Lamb in Revelation, chapter 15 is ‘God, *You alone* are holy.’ This is

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope<sup>1</sup> of the church, the dramatic, grand climax of earth’s history.<sup>2</sup> The Saviour’s coming will be literal,<sup>3</sup> personal,<sup>4</sup> visible,<sup>5</sup> and worldwide.<sup>6</sup> When He returns, the righteous dead • will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The time of that event has not been revealed,<sup>7</sup> and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times.<sup>8</sup> But, with all who welcome the day, we believe it will be soon.<sup>9</sup>

- <sup>1</sup>“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13).
- <sup>2</sup>“The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare” (2 Peter 3:10).

the refrain of the redeemed.” Chris Blake, *Swimming Against the Current*, 225.

• “Those who know the Ancient Star-Song watch with singing for the sign of footprints in the galaxies through which the little planet rides in routine cycles of despair. But Joy seldom sleeps for long. And someday in a lonely moment mankind will shake an unfamiliar hand and find it wounded.” Calvin Miller, *The Singer*, 151.

- <sup>3</sup> “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).
- <sup>4</sup> “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (John 14:3).
- <sup>5</sup> “If anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man” (Matthew 24:26, 27).
- <sup>6</sup> “Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him” (Revelation 1:7).
- <sup>7</sup> “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Mark 13:32).
- <sup>8</sup> “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour” (Matthew 25:13).
- <sup>9</sup> “Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here” (Romans 13:11, 12).

## 26. Death and Resurrection

• “Jesus’ death is the most radical expression of God’s desire to be God-with-us. Nothing makes all human beings so similar to each other as their mortality. Our common mortality shows the illusion of our differences, the

The sure and final result of separation from God, “the wages of sin,” is death. • But the Bible promises that God, “who alone is immortal” (1 Timothy 6:16), will grant eternal life to those He redeems.<sup>1</sup>

Until that day death is an unconscious state,<sup>2</sup> a “sleep,”<sup>3</sup> for all people.<sup>4</sup> • When Christ, who is our life, comes again to earth, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be immortalized and caught up to meet their Lord.<sup>5</sup>

This “mystery” constitutes one of the most precious beliefs of Christianity; the end of the tyranny of death • over our lives and the gift of eternal life through Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift

falseness of the many divisions among us, and the sins of our mutual enmities.

By dying with and for us, Jesus wanted to dispel our illusions, heal our divisions, and forgive our sins.”

Henri Nouwen,  
*Our Greatest Gift*,  
76, 77.

• “Today, if I had to answer the question ‘Where is God when it hurts?’ in a single sentence, I would make that sentence another question: ‘Where is the church when it hurts?’

We form the front line of God’s response to the suffering world.”  
Philip Yancey,  
*Where Is God When It Hurts*,  
243.

**of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).**

- <sup>2</sup> “For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing” (Ecclesiastes 9:5).
- <sup>3</sup> “After [Jesus] had said this, he went on to tell them, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.’ His disciples replied, ‘Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.’ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep” (John 11:12, 13).
- <sup>4</sup> “These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:13-16, 39, 40).
- <sup>5</sup> “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).
- <sup>6</sup> “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory’” (1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

### 27. The Millennium and the End of Sin

• “A sigh of relief settles over the re-created earth, and God makes His home with the saved forever. Emmanuel—God with us—eternal face-to-face fellowship... The first two chapters of the Bible describe the perfect world God created. The last two tell of the perfect world He’ll re-create. It’s a real place where real people with real bodies and brains can see, hear, touch, taste, smell, measure, imagine, test, and fully experience eternal life. And the best part of that world is the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise in John 14:3: ‘that where I am there you may be also.’”  
Sharon Leach,  
in *A Reason to Believe*, 40.

The Bible reveals that immediately after the Second Coming of Christ, following the resurrection of the saints and the taking to heaven of the living righteous, there will be a thousand-year period during which Jesus will reign with His saints in heaven.<sup>1</sup> During this time the wicked who remain dead will be judged; and the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels.<sup>2</sup>

At the close of this millennium, Jesus, with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected to face their Creator and Redeemer one last time. With Satan and his angels they will surround the Holy City with the intention of taking it by force; but fire from God will consume them and completely cleanse the earth.<sup>3</sup> The universe will thus be freed of sin forever. •

□ <sup>1</sup>“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4-6).

□ <sup>2</sup>“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended” (Revelation 20:1-3).

- <sup>3</sup> “When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth... to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them” (Revelation 20:7-9).

### 28. The New Earth

• “At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendours we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumour that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get in.” C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 17.

On the new earth, “the home of righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13), God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence.<sup>1</sup> God Himself and Jesus, the Lamb, will dwell with their people, and suffering and death will have passed away.<sup>2</sup> The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; • and with Jesus, our Redeemer, we shall live and reign forever.<sup>3</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> “The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away” (Isaiah 35:10).
- <sup>2</sup> “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:3, 4).
- <sup>3</sup> “No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 22:3-5).