

Preparing for Heaven

“As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

“Heaven is where Christ is. Heaven would not be heaven to those who love Christ if He were not there. Are we individually forming characters that will be meet for the society of Christ and the heavenly angels?”—The Review and Herald, October 19, 1897.

Suggested Reading: The Desire of Ages, pp. 68–74.

Sunday March 21

1. PREPARATION TIME

a. Why are we given time to live on this place called Earth? Ephesians 4:13.

Ephesians 4:13

[13] Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

“We cannot enter heaven with any deformity or imperfection of character, and we must be fitted for heaven now in this probationary life.”—The Signs of the Times, February 15, 1892.

“Every moment of our probationary time is precious; for it is our time for character building. We should give most diligent heed to the culture of our spiritual nature. We should watch our hearts, guarding our thoughts lest impurity tarnish the soul. We should seek to keep every faculty of the mind in the very best condition, that we may serve God to the extent of our ability. Nothing should be permitted to interrupt our communion with God.”—The Review and Herald, October 31, 1912.

b. What is the real goal before us, and how are we to prepare for it every single day? Revelation 3:12; Galatians 2:20.

Revelation 3:12

[12] Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is new*

Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Galatians 2:20

[20] I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

“The propensities that control the natural heart must be subdued by the grace of Christ before fallen man is fitted to enter heaven and enjoy the society of the pure, holy angels.”—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 273.

Monday March 22

2. THE ATMOSPHERE OF HEAVEN

a. What is Heaven like? 1 Corinthians 2:9; Revelation 21:3.

1 Corinthians 2:9

[9] But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Revelation 21:3

[3] And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

b. Where can we possibly prepare for that kind of atmosphere? Psalm 23:1, 2.

Psalms 23:1-2

[1] **A Psalm of David.** The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.

[2] He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

“To many of those living in the cities who have not a spot of green grass to set their feet upon, . . . if these could be taken to some farming district, surrounded with the green fields, the woods and hills and brooks, the clear skies and the fresh, pure air of the country, it would seem almost like heaven.

“Cut off to a great degree from contact with and dependence upon men, and separated from the world’s corrupting maxims and customs and excitements, they would come nearer to the heart of nature. God’s presence

would be more real to them. Many would learn the lesson of dependence upon Him. Through nature they would hear His voice speaking to their hearts of His peace and love, and mind and soul and body would respond to the healing, life-giving power.”—The Ministry of Healing, pp. 191, 192.

c. Though we are reminded daily of the effects of sin, what is speaking to our senses of the love of Christ? Psalm 104.

Psalms 104:1-35

- [1] Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.
- [2] Who coverest *thyself* with light as *with* a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:
- [3] Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:
- [4] Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:
- [5] *Who* laid the foundations of the earth, *that* it should not be removed for ever.
- [6] Thou coveredst it with the deep as *with* a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.
- [7] At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.
- [8] They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.
- [9] Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.
- [10] He sendeth the springs into the valleys, *which* run among the hills.
- [11] They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.
- [12] By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, *which* sing among the branches.
- [13] He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.
- [14] He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;
- [15] And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man, *and* oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart.
- [16] The trees of the LORD are full *of sap*; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

- [17] Where the birds make their nests: *as for* the stork, the fir trees *are* her house.
- [18] The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats; *and* the rocks for the conies.
- [19] He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.
- [20] Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep *forth*.
- [21] The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.
- [22] The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.
- [23] Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.
- [24] O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.
- [25] *So is* this great and wide sea, wherein *are* things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.
- [26] There go the ships: *there is* that leviathan, *whom* thou hast made to play therein.
- [27] These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give *them* their meat in due season.
- [28] *That* thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.
- [29] Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.
- [30] Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.
- [31] The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works.
- [32] He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.
- [33] I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
- [34] My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.
- [35] Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

“Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of

His hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature. The green fields, the lofty trees, the buds and flowers, the passing cloud, the falling rain, the babbling brook, the glories of the heavens, speak to our hearts, and invite us to become acquainted with Him who made them all.”—Christian Education, p. 54.

“The constant contact with the mystery of life and the loveliness of nature, as well as the tenderness called forth in ministering to these beautiful objects of God’s creation, tends to quicken the mind and refine and elevate the character; and the lessons taught prepare the worker to deal more successfully with other minds.”—Education, p. 112.

Tuesday March 23

3. LESSONS IN ABUNDANCE

a. What did Jesus use to teach us grand and wonderful spiritual truths?

Matthew 6:26, 28; John 3:8; 10:14.

Matthew 6:26-28

[26] Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

[27] Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

[28] And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

John 3:8

[8] The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

John 10:14

[14] I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

“Many are the ways in which God is seeking to make Himself known to us and to bring us into communion with Him. Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of His hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature. The green fields, the lofty trees, the buds and flowers, the passing cloud, the falling rain, the babbling brook, the glories of the heavens, speak to our hearts, and invite us to become acquainted with him who made them all.

“Our Saviour bound up His precious lessons with the things of nature. The trees, the birds, the flowers of the valleys, the hills, the lakes, and the beautiful heavens, as well as the incidents and surroundings of daily life, were all linked with the words of truth, that His lessons might thus be often recalled to mind, even amid the busy cares of man’s life of toil.”—Christian Education, p. 54.

b. What lesson of Jesus prophesied the approaching storm? Matthew 7:24–27; 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Matthew 7:24-27

[24] Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

[25] And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

[26] And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

[27] And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

1 Corinthians 10:4

[4] And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

“God has revealed what is to take place in the last days, that His people may be prepared to stand against the tempest of opposition and wrath. Those who have been warned of the events before them are not to sit in calm expectation of the coming storm, comforting themselves that the Lord will shelter His faithful ones in the day of trouble.”—The Faith I Live By, p. 325.

“You need to watch with the greatest care how you build. There is a storm coming which will test your hope to the utmost. You should dig deep and lay your foundation sure. . . . “Be careful . . . that your foundation is solid rock, that you are riveted to it, Christ being that Rock.”—Testimonies, vol. 3, p. 414.

Wednesday March 24

4. PROTECTION IN THE STORM

a. How can we be sure we are building on the Rock, Christ Jesus? 1 John 5:14, 15.

1 John 5:14-15

[14] And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

[15] And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

“The important future is before us. To meet its trials and temptations, and to perform its duties, will require great faith, energy, and perseverance. But we may triumph gloriously; for not one watching, praying, believing soul will be ensnared by the devices of the enemy. All heaven is interested in our welfare, and waits our demand upon its wisdom and strength. Every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted, ‘not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts’ (Zechariah 4:6). God is just as willing now as anciently to work through human efforts, and to accomplish great things through weak instrumentalities.”—The Watchman, December 25, 1906.

“It is not enough, [Christ] says, for you to hear My words. By obedience you must make them the foundation of your character. Self is but shifting sand. If you build upon human theories and inventions, your house will fall. By the winds of temptation, the tempests of trial, it will be swept away. But these principles that I have given will endure. Receive Me; build on My words.”—The Desire of Ages, p. 314.

b. Will God protect us when we do not follow His counsel? 1 Samuel 2:30; Mark 7:6. What about if we do heed it?

1 Samuel 2:30

[30] Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

Mark 7:6

[6] He answered and said unto them, **Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.**

“The baleful influence of sin poisons the life of the soul. Our only safety is in separation from those who live in its darkness. The Lord has enjoined

upon us to come out from among them and be separate, and to touch not the unclean thing, and He will receive us and will be a Father unto us, and we shall be His sons and daughters. If we wish to be adopted into the family of God, to become children of the heavenly King, we must comply with His conditions; we must come out from the world and stand as a peculiar people before the Lord, obeying His precepts and serving Him.”—Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 109, 110.

“Suppose that residence in the country or in a village is not as favorable for obtaining a livelihood, not as conducive to advancement in temporal things; would not God honor your trust in Him? and would not self-denial for Christ's sake make your lot a blessed one?”—The Review and Herald, January 20, 1891.

Thursday March 25

5. THE CALL

a. God has mercifully given a message to His people. What is it? 2

Corinthians 6:17.

2 Corinthians 6:17

[17] Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

“Before the overflowing scourge shall come upon the dwellers of the earth, the Lord calls upon all who are Israelites indeed to prepare for that event. To parents He sends the warning cry, Gather your children into your own houses; gather them away from those who are disregarding the commandments of God, who are teaching and practicing evil. Get out of the large cities as fast as possible. Establish church schools. Give your children the word of God as the foundation of all their education.”—Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 195.

“The Lord’s message was, ‘Out of the cities; break up the continual temptation to engage in commercial business, which has been such a great injury to the work.’ A failure to heed the messages given, and repeated for years, has been a decided injury to the souls of many.”—The Publishing Ministry, p. 165.

b. What should be our willing response to His call to our heart? Joshua 24:15; Isaiah 6:8.

Joshua 24:15

[15] And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers

served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Isaiah 6:8

[8] Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me.

“The world must hear the warning. When the call comes, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ send back the answer clear and distinct, ‘Here am I; send me’ (Isaiah 6:8).”—Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 333.