

Sabbath, January 7, 2023

# God's Word to Humanity Today

**MEMORY TEXT:** “Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord” (Jeremiah 17:5).

“In His mercy and faithfulness God often permits those in whom we place confidence to fail us, in order that we may learn the folly of trusting in man and making flesh our arm.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 486.

**Suggested Readings: Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, pp. 460-463 (at the bottom of this page)**

*Sunday January 1*

## 1. HOW WAS THE BIBLE GIVEN?

**a. In what manner were the Scriptures given? (Provide specifics.) 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; Numbers 12:6.**

**2 Timothy 3:16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

**2 Peter 1:21** For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

**Numbers 12:6** And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

“It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words and thoughts receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 21.

**b. When seeking guidance from God, what must we realize about dreams and visions? Deuteronomy 13:1–5; Jeremiah 29:8.**

**Deuteronomy 13:1-5** If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, **2** And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; **3** Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. **4** Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. **5** And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to

death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

**Jeremiah 29:8** For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.

**c. What are some other causes for dreams? Ecclesiastes 5:3, 7.**

**Ecclesiastes 5:3, 7** For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. **7** For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.

**d. How are we to test the prophets? 1 Corinthians 14:32; Isaiah 8:19, 20.**

**1 Corinthians 14:32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

**Isaiah 8:19-20** And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? **20** To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

*Monday January 2*

**2. ARE THE SCRIPTURES INFALLIBLE?**

**a. To what extent can we trust the purity of God's Word? Psalm 12:6, 7.**

**Psalm 12:6-7** The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. **7** Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

“We have a Bible full of the most precious truth. It contains the alpha and the omega of knowledge.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 309.

“In the Bible we have the unerring counsel of God. Its teachings, practically carried out, will fit men for any position of duty. It is the voice of God speaking every day to the soul. How carefully should the young study the word of God and treasure up its sentiments in the heart, that its precepts may be made to govern the whole conduct.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 441.

“In His Word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 13.

“[The youth] need an unerring counselor, an infallible guide. This they will find in the Word of God. Unless they are diligent students of that Word, they will make grave mistakes, which will mar their happiness and that of others, both for the present and the future life.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 443.

**b. How lasting are the principles found in Scripture? Matthew 24:35; Psalm 119:160; Isaiah 40:8.**

**Matthew 24:35** Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

**Psalm 119:160** Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

**Isaiah 40:8** The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

“[Christ] taught that the word of God was to be understood by all. He pointed to the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority, and we should do the same. The Bible is to be presented as the word of the infinite God, as the end of all controversy and the foundation of all faith.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 39, 40.

“The Bible, fully received and studied as the voice of God, tells the human family how to reach the abodes of eternal happiness, and secure the treasures of heaven.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 444.

“Shall not the education given in our schools be of that character which will give a more decided knowledge of God’s word, and which will bring the soul into a vital connection with God, keeping God before the mind’s eye, and arousing every better feeling of the soul? This is the kind of education which is as enduring as eternity.”—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 6, 1899.

*Tuesday January 3*

### **3. RECEIVING THE WRITINGS OF DIVINE INSPIRATION**

**a. What must we realize when God speaks through His prophets? Jeremiah 1:4–9; 1 Thessalonians 2:13.**

**Jeremiah 1:4-9** Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, **5** Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. **6** Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. **7** But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. **8** Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. **9** Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13** For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

“Christ taught His disciples that they were to open their minds to instruction, and be ready to believe. He pronounced a blessing upon them because they saw and heard with eyes and ears that believed. . . .

“Only he who receives the Scriptures as the voice of God speaking to himself is a true learner. He trembles at the word; for to him it is a living reality.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 59.

“The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all ‘given by inspiration of God’ (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 25.

**b. What does God often reveal through His prophets in order to help us understand the all-knowing and eternal nature of Deity? Amos 3:7; Isaiah 46:9, 10. Amos 3:7** Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

**Isaiah 46:9-10** Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, **10** Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

“History and prophecy testify that the God of the whole earth revealeth secrets through His chosen light-bearers to the world. A skeptical world, talking and writing of higher education, is prating of things which it does not understand. It does not see that true, higher education comprehends a more perfect knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. There are few who understand that all true human science is from the God of science, and that God demonstrates to the world that He is King over all.”—*Bible Training School*, December 1, 1912.

“In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 499, 500.

*Wednesday January 4*

#### **4. WHAT IS NECESSARY ON OUR PART?**

**a. What type of attitude are we to possess when studying the Bible? Isaiah 66:1, 2; John 7:17; Acts 17:10, 11.**

**Isaiah 66:1-2** Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? **2** For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

**John 7:17** If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

**Acts 17:10-11** And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. **11** These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

“When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

“To controvert, to question, to criticize, to ridicule, is the education many have received and the fruit they bear. They refuse to admit evidence. The natural heart is in warfare against light, truth, and knowledge. Jesus Christ has been in every sleeping room where you have been entertained. How many prayers went up to heaven from these rooms?”—*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 140.

“There is no assurance that our doctrine is right and free from all chaff and error unless we are daily doing the will of God. If we do His will, we shall know of the doctrine. We shall see the truth in its sacred beauty. We shall accept it with reverence and godly fear, and then we can present that which we know is truth to others. There should be no feeling of superiority or self-exaltation in this solemn work.”—*Ibid.*, p.46.

## **b. What part of the Bible is more important than the rest? Romans 15:4; Luke 24:27; Isaiah 28:10.**

**Romans 15:4** For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

**Luke 24:27** And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

**Isaiah 28:10** For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

“Every part of the Bible is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. The Old Testament, no less than the New, should receive attention. As we study the Old Testament we shall find living springs bubbling up where the careless reader discerns only a desert.

“The Old Testament sheds light upon the New, and the New upon the Old. Each is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 462.

*Thursday January 5*

## **5. NOT ENOUGH JUST TO READ AND STUDY**

### **a. What are we to do with the things that we learn while studying Holy Writ? Proverbs 2:1–5; Psalm 119:11, 16.**

**Proverbs 2:1-5** My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; **2** So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; **3** Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; **4** If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; **5** Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

**Psalm 119:11, 16** Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. **16** I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

“The Holy Spirit loves to address the youth, and to discover to them the treasures and beauties of God’s word. The promises spoken by the great Teacher will captivate the senses and animate the soul with spiritual power that is divine. There will grow in the fruitful mind a familiarity with divine things that will be as a barricade against temptation.

“The words of truth will grow in importance, and assume a breadth and fullness of meaning of which we have never dreamed. The beauty and riches of the word have a

transforming influence on mind and character. The light of heavenly love will fall upon the heart as an inspiration.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 132.

**b. If we take these things to heart, to what are we compared? Luke 6:46–49.**

**Luke 6:46-49** And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? **47** Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: **48** He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. **49** But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

“The heart that is stored with the precious truths of God’s Word is fortified against the temptation of Satan, against impure thoughts and unholy actions.”—*My Life Today*, p. 28.

**c. What are we to ask the Lord to do for us—and why? Psalm 119:133.**

**Psalm 119:133** Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

“Divine wisdom will order the steps of those who put their trust in the Lord. Divine love will encircle them, and they will realize the presence of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 324.

*Friday January 6*

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How is divine inspiration given to humanity?
2. To what extent can we trust the Bible, and why?
3. What is the purpose of giving prophetic writings, and what authority do all inspired writings bring with them?
4. How does attitude affect Bible study?
5. How do we build our life on a sure foundation?

**Suggested Readings: Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, pp. 460-463**

There is nothing more calculated to energize the mind and strengthen the intellect than the study of the word of God. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God’s word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose that are rarely seen in these times. The search for truth will reward the seeker at every turn, and each discovery will open up richer fields for his investigation. (CT 460.1)

Thousands of men who minister in the pulpit are lacking in essential qualities of mind and character because they do not apply themselves to the study of the Scriptures. They are content with a superficial knowledge of the truths that are full of rich depths of meaning; and they prefer to go on, losing much in every way, rather than to search diligently for the hidden treasure. (CT 460.2)

Men are changed in accordance with what they contemplate. If commonplace thoughts and affairs take up the attention, the man will be commonplace. If he is too negligent to obtain anything but a superficial understanding of truth, he will not receive the rich blessings that God would be pleased to bestow upon him. It is the law of the mind that it will narrow or expand to the dimensions of the things with which it becomes familiar. The mental powers will surely become contracted and will lose their ability to grasp the deep meanings of the word of God unless they are put vigorously and persistently to the task of searching for truth. The mind will enlarge if it is employed in tracing out the relation of the subjects of the Bible to one another, comparing scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual. The richest treasures of thought are waiting for the diligent student. **(CT 460.3)**

The knowledge of God is not gained without mental effort and prayer for wisdom. Many are convinced that the precious treasures of the kingdom of God and of Christ are contained in the word. They know also that no earthly treasure is gained without painstaking effort. Why should they expect to understand the meaning of the Scriptures without diligent study? **(CT 461.1)**

The word of God is light and truth—a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. It is able to guide every step of the way to the city of God. For this reason, Satan has made desperate efforts to obscure the light, that men may not find and keep the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. **(CT 461.2)**

As the miner digs for the golden treasure in the earth, so earnestly, persistently, must we seek for the treasure of God's word. In daily study the verse-by-verse method is often most helpful. Let the student take one verse and concentrate his mind on ascertaining the thought that God has put into that verse for him, and then dwell upon the thought until it becomes his own. One passage thus studied until its significance becomes clear is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained. **(CT 461.3)**

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme—of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for the supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. **(CT 462.1)**

Every part of the Bible is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. The Old Testament, no less than the New, should receive attention. As we study the Old Testament we shall find living springs bubbling up where the careless reader discerns only a desert. **(CT 462.2)**

The Old Testament sheds light upon the New, and the New upon the Old. Each is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ. Christ as manifested to the patriarchs, as symbolized in the sacrificial service, as portrayed in the law, and as revealed by the prophets is the riches of the Old Testament. Christ in His life, His death, and His resurrection; Christ as He is manifested by the Holy Spirit, is the treasure of the New. Both Old and New present truths that will continually reveal new depths of meaning to the earnest seeker. **(CT 462.3)**

When a real love for the Bible is awakened, and the student begins to realize how vast is the field and how precious its treasure, he will desire to seize upon every opportunity for acquainting himself with God's word. Its study will be restricted to no special time or place. And this continuous study is one of the best means of cultivating a love for the Scriptures. Let the student keep his Bible always with him and, as he has opportunity, read a text and meditate upon it. While walking in the streets, waiting at a railway station, waiting to meet an engagement, let him improve the opportunity to gain some precious thought from the treasure house of truth. **(CT 463.1)**

The student of the word should not make his opinions a center around which truth is to revolve. He should not search for the purpose of finding texts of Scripture that he can construe to prove his theories, for this is wresting the Scriptures to his own destruction. The Bible student must empty himself of every prejudice, lay his own ideas at the door of investigation, and with humble, subdued heart, with self hid in Christ, with earnest prayer, he should seek wisdom from God. He should seek to know the revealed will of God because it concerns his present and eternal welfare. This word is the directory by which he must learn the way to eternal life. **(CT 463.2)**