

## **DAY BY DAY**

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,  
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

### **4.04: READINESS**

#### **1. THE TWO SONS**

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Matthew 21:28-31.

"Christ did not condemn the first son for refusing to obey his father's command. At the same time he did not commend him. The class who act the part of the son who said, "I will not," deserve no credit for holding the position they do. This openness is not to be commended as a virtue. Sanctified by truth and holiness, this element will make a man a bold witness for Christ; but used as it is by the sinner, it is insulting and defiant, and approaches to blasphemy. The fact that a man is not a hypocrite does not make him any less a sinner. When the appeals of the Spirit of God come to the heart, our only safety lies in responding to them without delay.

"When the call comes, "Son, go work today in My vineyard," do not refuse the invitation. Cease working on the enemy's side, and take your position under the bloodstained banner of the Prince of life. He is the way, the truth, and the life. While it is called today, "if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." It may be that you will never hear the invitation again. A mere answer in the affirmative is not enough. We are to repent and forsake every sin, and work the works of righteousness. Will the sinner acknowledge God's claims? Will he serve the Lord, or will he continue in sin?" Review and Herald, Feb. 27, 1900.

"In the sermon on the mount, Christ said, "Not every one that says unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 7:21. The test of sincerity is not in words, but in deeds. Christ does not say to any man, What say you more than others? but, "What do you more than others?" Matthew 5:47. Full of meaning are His words, "If you know these things, happy are you if you do them." John 13:17. Words are of no value unless they are accompanied with appropriate deeds. This is the lesson taught in the parable of the two sons." Christ's Object Lessons, 272.

"In this parable the father represents God, the vineyard the church. By the two sons are represented two classes of people. The son who refused to obey, the command, saying, "I will not," represented those who were living in open transgression, who made no profession of piety, who openly refused to come under the yoke of restraint and obedience which the law of God imposes. But many of these afterward repented, and obeyed the call of God. When the gospel came to them in the message of John the Baptist, "Repent you: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2), they repented, and confessed their sins." Christ's Object Lessons, 275, 276.

#### **2. LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD**

"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a

day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

“And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.” Matthew 20:1-16.

“This parable rebukes all jealousy, envy, and hateful suspicions. Love rejoices in the truth, and institutes no comparisons. He who possesses love, only compares the majestic loveliness of Christ and his own imperfect character. . . . When pride and self-complacency are brought into the work, the work is marred. The value of the Christian's labors is to be found only in the grace given him of Jesus Christ. The spirit that goes with the labor is that which gives it its value. Those who are first, through self-complacency and pride may become last of all, while those who cherish meekness may become first; for the reward is not of works, but of grace, lest any man should boast, and exalt himself above his fellows. It is the spirit that determines the worthiness or unworthiness of the work. Every call to work in the vineyard is from the Lord. . . . if any one has been laboring for anything else except the Lord's glory, he will be disappointed in receiving a reward. The reception of the penny by the laborers represents the character that God will give to those who follow Him. We are to keep in view eternal realities, and our spiritual eyesight must be clear; for those only who behold Christ will be changed into His image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Review and Herald, July 10, 1894.

### **3. MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON**

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and

cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:2-14.

"Faith is made perfect by works. Those who make no change in character, though claiming the privilege of being called Christians, have not on the wedding garment. They think that in themselves they are good enough, virtuous enough. Without faith in Christ, they rest upon their own merits. True repentance for sin they have never felt. Therefore when Christ comes in to examine the guests, the command goes forth, "Bind him hand and foot. . . . cast him into outer darkness."

"Many are called, but few are chosen. This is a true statement of the final outcome. Man is very dear to the heart of God, and all are invited to this feast. But many come not having on the wedding garment. They do not accept Christ's righteousness. They have not repented and made peace with God. They have not received His free gift.

"Christ must be all and in all to every soul. Those who try in their own strength to solve the mystery of the creation of man, the mystery of redemption, the mystery of eternity, will be baffled. But those who put on the garment provided for them at an infinite cost, find an abundant entrance to the rich feast of spiritual blessings. By receiving this garment they acknowledge that in bestowing it God confers on them a great favor. And as they receive the righteousness of the Savior, God places His stamp on them.

Only One can bestow this priceless gift, but all may receive it, and thus become entitled to a place at the feast. The call to this feast is a call to partake of the richest spiritual provision. All who respond to this call will find awaiting them an abundant supply of grace, and the more grace they receive, the more they desire. Those who partake of this feast may come into their heavenly Father, saying, Thou has kept the best wine until now." Review and Herald, May 8, 1900.

#### **4. THE PROMISE OF CHRIST'S COMING**

"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isaiah 25:8, 9.

"The coming of the Lord has been in all ages the hope of His true followers. The Savior's parting promise upon Olivet, that He would come again, lighted up the future for His disciples, filling their hearts with joy and hope that sorrow could not quench nor trials dim. Amid suffering and persecution, "The appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" was the "blessed hope." When the Thessalonian Christians were filled with grief as they buried their loved ones, who had hoped to live to witness the coming of the Lord, Paul, their teacher, pointed them to the resurrection to take place at the Savior's advent. Then the dead in Christ should rise, and together with the living be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. "And so," he said, "shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." I Thessalonians 4:16-18.

"On rocky Patmos the beloved disciple hears the promise, "Surely I come quickly," and his longing response voices the prayer of the church in all her pilgrimage, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Revelation 22:20." The Great Controversy, 302.

"Long have we waited for our Savior's return. But none the less sure is the promise. Soon we shall be in our promised home. There Jesus will lead us beside the living stream, flowing from the throne of God, and will explain to us the dark providences through which on this earth He brought us in order to perfect

our characters. There we shall behold with undimmed vision the beauties of Eden restored. Casting at the feet of the Redeemer the crowns that He has placed on our heads, and touching our golden harps, we shall fill all heaven with praise to Him that sits on the throne." Testimonies 8, 254.

"The promise of Christ's Second Coming was ever to be kept fresh in the minds of His disciples. The same Jesus whom they had seen ascending into heaven, would come again, to take to Himself those who here below give themselves to His service. The same voice that had said to them, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end," would bid them welcome to His presence in the heavenly kingdom. . . .

"Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honor and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying to them, Your warfare is accomplished. "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34." Acts of the Apostles, 33, 34.

## **5. THE MANNER OF CHRIST'S COMING**

His Coming Will Be Personal: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3.

His Coming Will Be Literal: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." I Thessalonians 4:16.

His Coming Will Be Visible: "When He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:9-11.

"Christ had ascended to heaven in the form of humanity. The disciples had beheld the cloud receive Him. The same Jesus who had walked and talked and prayed with them, who had broken bread with them, who had been with them in their boats on the lake, and who had that very day toiled with them up the ascent of Olivet, the same Jesus had now gone to share His Father's throne. And the angels had assured them that the very One whom they had seen go up into heaven, would come again even as He had ascended. He will come "with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." "The Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." Revelation 1:7; I Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 25:31." The Desire of Ages, 832.

"This is a thrilling time; Far-reaching questions, mighty in portent, Concern the mind of statesman and of sage; The issues of the ages by consent Focus their climax on this last-day page.

"This is an awful time, Of blood and war and strife and secret shame; The truth of God is turned into a lie; In wrathful tones do men despite His name As rebels bold His government defy.

This is a needy time; Brave men are needed, loyal for the right, To stand for God and truth against sin and wrong, With courage bold to battle with their might, Till conflict fierce shall end in victor's song,

"This is a weary time; Sad hearts are loaded down with pain and care, The toils of earth in never ceasing round Banish fond hope, the joys of life outwear; In this old world but little rest is found.

"This is a solemn time; For now the judge of earth and sea and sky, Upon His heavenly throne in lofty state Holds solemn court, the sons of men to try; On its decision hangs their every fate.

"This is a cheering time; The signs of God point to the glorious day But When He shall come whose right it is to reign; Light hope lights up the rugged, darkened way That leads to morn from night, to joy from pain." F. M. Wilcox

## **6. SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS**

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:29, 30.

"In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Mark 13:24-26.

"Let men beware lest they neglect the lesson conveyed to them in the words of Christ. As He warned His disciples of Jerusalem's destruction, giving them a sign of the approaching ruin, that they might make their escape; so He has warned the world of the day of final destruction, and has given them tokens of its approach, that all who will may flee from the wrath to Come. Jesus declares, "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations." Those who behold these harbingers of His coming are to "know that it is near, even at the doors." Matthew 24:33. "Watch you therefore" (Mark 13:35), are His words of admonition. They that heed the warning shall not be left in darkness, that that day should overtake them unawares. But to them that will not watch, "the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." I Thessalonians 2:2-5. The Great Controversy, pages 37, 38.

"The Savior gives signs of His coming, and more than this, He fixes the time when the first of these signs shall appear: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

"At the close of the great papal persecution, Christ declared, the sun should be darkened, and the moon should not give her light. Next, the stars should fall from heaven. And He says, "Learn a parable of the fig tree. When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh. So likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors."

"Christ has given signs of His coming. He declares that we may know when He is near, even at the doors. He says of those who see these signs, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." These signs have appeared. Now we know of a surety that the Lord's coming is at hand. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," He says, "but My words shall not pass away." Desire of Ages, 631, 632.

## **7. SIGNS IN THE SOCIAL WORLD**

"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it

rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:26-30.

"As it was in the days of Noah," "even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:26, 30. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10. When the reasoning of philosophy has banished the fear of God's judgments; when religious teachers are pointing forward to long ages of peace and prosperity, and the world are absorbed in their rounds of business and pleasure, planting and building, feasting and merrymaking, rejecting God's warnings and mocking His messengers, then it is that sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape." Patriarchs and Prophets, 104.

"In Noah's day the inhabitants of the old world laughed to scorn what they termed the superstitious fears and foreboding of the preacher of righteousness. He was denounced as a visionary character, a fanatic, an alarmist. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." Men will reject the solemn message of warning in our day, as they did in Noah's time. They will refer to those false teachers who have predicted the event and set the definite time, and will say that they have no more faith in our warning than in theirs. This is the attitude of the world today. Unbelief is widespread, and the preaching of Christ's coming is mocked at and derided. This makes it all the more essential that those who believe present truth should show their faith by their works. They should be sanctified through the truth which they profess to believe; for they are a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. . .

"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." They were eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and swept them all away. The day of God will find men absorbed in like manner in the business and pleasures of the world, in feasting and gluttony, and in indulging perverted appetite in the defiling use of liquor, and the narcotic tobacco. This is already the condition of our world, and these indulgences are found even among God's professed people, some of whom are following the customs and partaking of the sins of the world." Testimonies 4, 308, 309.