

Seeing the Goldsmith's Face



SABBATH—JULY 16

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Romans 8:29; Job 23:1–10; Matthew 25:31–46; Daniel 12:1–12; Ephesians 4:11–16.

MEMORY VERSE: “All of us have no cloth over our faces. People can see that we have some of the bright and wonderful light that the Lord has. And we are becoming brighter and brighter, more and more like [the same as] him. It is the Lord, the Spirit, who does this [makes us the same as God]” (2 Corinthians 3:18, WE).



The goldsmith used some special tools to remove the gold from the fire. Then the goldsmith checked the gold.

AMY CARMICHAEL took a group of children to a goldsmith in India. The goldsmith kept a big fire burning in his workshop. The goldsmith put a small square of baked clay in the fire. On the clay square, the goldsmith put salt, some special fruit, and brick dust. Then he lit the mix on fire. In the middle of this burning mix was a lump of gold. The fire burned up the dirt and tiny rocks inside the gold. The goldsmith used some special tools to remove the gold from the fire. Then the goldsmith checked the gold. If the gold was not ready, the goldsmith put it back in the fire. Then he made the fire burn hotter. The group of children asked the goldsmith, “How do you know when the gold is ready?” The goldsmith answered, “When I can see my face in it.”—Amy Carmichael, *Learning of God* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1989), page 50, adapted.

God wants to get us ready, too. He wants to make us the same as the gold. God wants to see Himself in us. How does God change us so that we look the same as He does? He permits us to suffer and to have difficult tests of faith in this life. These tests show us what is in our hearts.

MADE TO LOOK THE SAME AS GOD (Romans 8:29)

“God knew from the beginning who would put their trust in Him. So He chose them and made them to be like [the same as] His Son. Christ was first and all those who belong to God are His brothers” (Romans 8:29, NLV).

In the beginning, God made us so that we looked and behaved the same as He does. We were copies of Himself. But then sin ruined the copy.

How has sin destroyed God’s holy beauty in us?

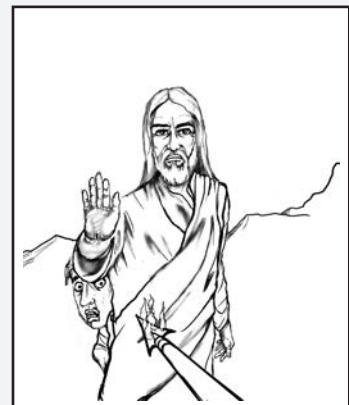
We all have been ruined by sin (Romans 3:10–19). God’s plan is to make us new again. Today’s Bible verse shows us God’s plan. First, we must give our lives fully to the control of the Holy Spirit. Then God can change us “to be like [the same as] His Son” (Romans 8:29, NLV).

But there’s more. “God wants our hearts to become the same as His heart. God is honored in front of all the angels when we become the same as He is. Jesus is honored, too.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 671, adapted.

What does the quote above from Ellen G. White mean to you? For help in answering the question, also read Job 1; Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 3:10.

As Christians, we must always remember that we are in the middle of the worldwide war between God and Satan. This war happens all around us. We see the fight in many different places and in different ways on this earth. But there is so much more that we can’t see. Even so, we understand that we have an important part in this war. We can bring honor to the name of Jesus by the way we live.

Make this picture in your mind: You are on a big playing field inside a stadium. The seats are filled with angels. On the seats to the right, you see angels who are loyal to God. On the seats to the left, you see the angels who fell with Lucifer. Think about your life for the past 24 hours. If everything you did that day happened on the field for everyone to see, which group of angels will cheer the most? What does your answer tell you about yourself?



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STAYING STRONG DURING TIMES OF SUFFERING (Job 23:1–10)

As Christians, we know that we are in a war. We know about the evil forces out there. We may not see them. But we can feel them working against us in our lives. So, we must stay strong in faith. We must trust God “who can’t be seen” (Hebrews 11:27, NIV).

Read about Job’s suffering in Job 23:1–10. What upsets Job the most about his suffering? What doesn’t Job understand? At the same time, what does Job accept in faith?



Job refuses to give up hope or faith in God.

For sure, Job suffers much. But he continues to trust in the Lord. Job refuses to give up hope or faith in God. What was one of the things that kept Job’s faith strong? Gold. No, not a gold medal or award. Job was looking to his future reward from God. Job knew that he must stay strong in faith. Then God can make him the same as gold. We don’t know how much Job knew about the real reasons for his suffering. But we do know that Job stayed strong during his suffering. This suffering was the same as a fire. Job stayed strong in the fire because he obeyed God.

Are you afraid of the “fire”? Do you worry about how “hot” or bad things will get? Maybe your experience is the same as Job’s. You don’t understand the reasons for the “fire” or test. Maybe you are having trouble at your new job or with your new house. Maybe people are mean and nasty to you at work. Or maybe your own family is not nice to you. Maybe you have been ill or lost a lot of money. You may have a hard time understanding the reasons for your suffering. But remember, you don’t need to understand what happens to you. God can use these hard times to give you a new heart and help you to become as He is.

What gives Job hope to stay alive? Job wants to be the same as gold that is made valuable in the fire. This hope helps Job stay strong during all his troubles. In the middle of all his pain and suffering, Job understood that God wanted to change him and make him better. For sure, he didn’t understand everything that happened to him. But Job knew that his tests will make his faith in God stronger.

How have tests and suffering caused your faith to grow stronger? God uses other ways to help your heart become the same as His. What are they?

JESUS' FINAL WORDS (Matthew 25:1–13, 31–46)

Jesus is in Jerusalem, about to die. Matthew tells us about the things that Jesus teaches His followers before He goes to the cross. Jesus tells His followers picture stories. Two of these picture stories include “The Ten Sleeping Girls” and “The Sheep and the Goats.” These picture stories show us how we should live as we wait for Jesus to come. All around us we see signs that show us that Jesus is about to come soon. So, these picture stories are very important to us today.

You can read the picture story about “The Ten Sleeping Girls” in Matthew 25:1–13. In the story, the oil is a word picture for the Holy Spirit. Ellen G. White agrees. She also says that the oil shows us something else. The oil shows us the new thoughts, feelings, and behavior that God wants to give to us.

Read the picture story about “The Ten Sleeping Girls” in Matthew 25:1–13. How does the story change if the oil has two different meanings? If we see the oil as the Holy Spirit, what will the story mean? Or what will the story mean if we see the oil as a new life in Christ, with new thoughts, feelings, and behavior?

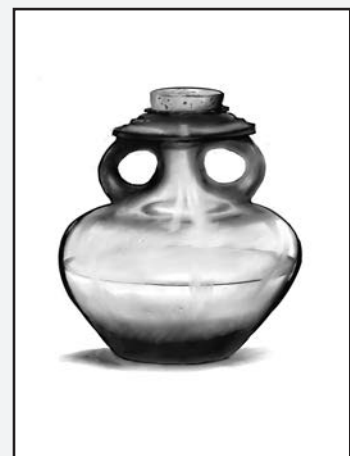
Holy Spirit _____

New Heart _____

Read the picture story about the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31–46. What important rules does the king use to separate the sheep from the goats?

Do you see the reason the king separates the sheep from the goats? The reason is how they behave, think, feel, and act. For sure, Jesus doesn't teach us that we are saved by our good behavior. But we can see that our behavior is important in God's plan to save us. Our lives and behavior will show that Jesus saves us.

What type of person are you when no one is watching? What does the answer tell you about the changes you need to make?



The oil is a word picture for the Holy Spirit.

THE WISE (Daniel 12:1–12)

Yesterday, we looked at why good behavior is important for Christians as they wait for the Second Coming. Today, we will look at why good behavior is important for the people who are alive at the Second Coming.

Read Daniel 12:1–10. What do these verses talk about? What time in earth’s history do these verses show us? Most important, how will God’s people behave during these times? How is their behavior different from the behavior of evil people? Also read Revelation 22:11 for more information.



“The wise” are wise because they understand the time of trouble that happens on the earth. They are not surprised.

The angel tells Daniel how things will be on the earth before Jesus comes back. There will be terrible troubles and a time of suffering worse than any other time in earth’s history. In Daniel 12:3, 10, we see a picture of God’s holy people and the evil people during this time. Do you see that “ ‘evil people will continue to be evil’ ” (Daniel 12:10, ERV)? But “ ‘the wise people will shine as bright as the sky’ ” (Daniel 12:3, ERV). The wise have been “ ‘made pure [holy; free from sin] . . . they will make themselves [their spirit, hearts, and minds] clean’ ” (Daniel 12:3, ERV). “ ‘There will be a time of much trouble, the worst time since nations [countries; people groups] have been on earth’ ” (Daniel 12:1, ERV). The evil people don’t have any understanding. But God’s holy people are wise. God’s people understand the real cause of the trouble on the earth.

Proverbs tells us, “If you really want to gain [get] knowledge, you must begin [start] by having [showing] respect for the LORD” (Proverbs 1:7, NIV). For sure, we can say that “the wise” are wise because they understand the time of trouble that happens on the earth. They are not surprised. They see this time of trouble coming because they study the Bible. Most important, they know that they have done everything the Lord asked them to do to get ready for this time. On the other hand, the wicked become more stubborn. They continue to fight against God. They continue in their evil ways.

These verses are important because they show us a group of people who have been made clean and holy.

What important rules do you see in Daniel 12:1–10? How do these rules help us now to understand what it means to be made clean and holy today?

**OUR HEARTS AND OUR COMMUNITIES
(Ephesians 4:11–16)**

Read Ephesians 4:11–16. What important Bible truth does Paul share in these verses? Why is the church so important to our faith and our spiritual experience?

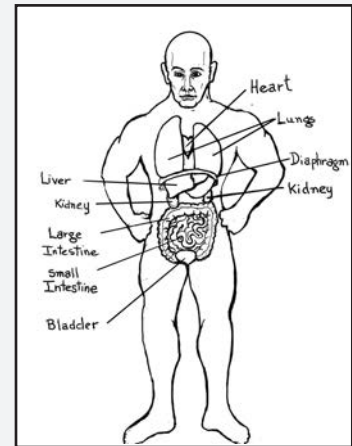
When Paul writes to the Ephesians, he says the church is much the same as a body. Jesus is the same as the head. His people are the same as the different body parts. Look at Ephesians 4:13. Do you see the reason for the church? God made the church so that we will become the same as “a full-grown man . . . to look just like [the same as] Christ [Jesus] and have all his perfection [life free from sin]” (Ephesians 4:13, ERV). For sure, we need each other for that!

Often, we must stand alone for our faith. At the same time, Paul wants us to understand an important Bible truth. We learn about Jesus and His perfect life when we work together and fellowship with each other.

In Ephesians 4:11–16, what does Paul say must happen before we may show Jesus in all His perfect beauty in the church?

How does the church show the holy life of Jesus? Read Ephesians 3:10 for the answer. How does this picture look different from only one person who shows the holy life of Jesus? What is important about the church in the worldwide war between God and Satan?

For sure, it is easy to be nice when you are with strangers. But it’s much harder to be nice to people you know well or don’t really like, right? When we show these people God’s love, we prove Bible truth. Why is this proof so powerful?



When Paul writes to the Ephesians, he says the church is much the same as a body.



“We must get good thoughts, feelings, and behavior from God.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “God Promises Us a New Heart of Flesh,” page 100, in *Sons and Daughters of God*; “‘To Meet the Bridegroom,’” pages 405–421, in *Christ’s Object Lessons*; and “The Time of Trouble,” pages 613–634, in *The Great Controversy*.

“God gives us very important work. He wants us to show other people that we have new thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Now, more than ever, we must study hard how to do that. The church has never before lived in times as difficult as now. We must answer very important questions about Bible truth. Young men and women will need to stand against sins and evil far worse than any other evil in history.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 225, adapted.

What must we do to get ready for the Second Coming? We must ask Jesus to change our hearts. Then we will learn to be patient when we suffer. “In the picture story about the Ten Sleeping Girls, five of the young girls ask for oil. But they don’t get any. What does this part of the story show us? We see these five girls didn’t get ready for the Second Coming. So, they can’t stand strong in the time of trouble. They can’t go to their neighbors and say, ‘Give me your thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Or I will be lost.’ The wise girls can’t give their oil for the lamps of the silly girls. The lamps of the five girls are about to go out. What other Bible truth does this part of the story show? We can’t give someone our thoughts, feelings, and good behavior. We can’t sell these things to anyone or buy them from anyone. We must get them from God. The Lord gives every person a chance to get a new heart before the time of trouble starts. We can only get this new heart by hard tests and difficult experiences. We must learn lessons from Jesus, our Teacher. Then we will learn how to be patient when we suffer. We will know how to show faith to do what everyone says is impossible.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, January 16, 1896, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What does it mean to “grow” new thoughts, feelings, and behavior? How can you work with God to make this change?
- ② Helen Keller was deaf and blind from an early age. She wrote, “The heart and mind cannot be grown in a life free from pain and suffering. Difficult tests and suffering make us strong, gives us wisdom, and success.”—*Leadership*, volume 17, number 4. Do you agree? Explain your answer.

PART 4: MAKING SECRET PLANS WITH EVIL SPIRITS

Several months passed before Mother and Junior learned why Father left them for two months. During that time, Father lived in the Candomblé temple in Manaus, Brazil. Father left home because Junior wanted to become a Seventh-day Adventist. Junior wanted to be baptized after he saw a man get baptized at church. At the Candomblé temple, the evil spirits told Father to stop the baptism.

At home, Father tried to convince Junior not to get baptized. But Junior refused. The evil spirits warned Father that he was going to be destroyed if he didn't stop Junior. Father didn't understand how Junior's baptism was going to destroy him. But he agreed to move out of the house. The spirits wanted Mother to give up her faith and stop taking Junior to church. So, the spirits caused Mother to lose both her husband and her job on the same day. Father didn't want to leave home. He worried about the spirits' plan all day. But when Mother arrived home late from church, Father got angry and left the next morning.

At first, the plan happened just as the spirits promised. Father left home, and Mother lost her job. But the rest of the plan didn't happen the way the evil spirits wanted. The spirits planned for Mother to stop taking Junior to church when she ran out of money for gas. But church members came and drove her and Junior to church. After two months, the spirits announced that they made a new plan to keep Junior from getting baptized. As part of their new plan, the spirits told Father to go back home.

In the meantime, Junior started to study the Bible to get ready for baptism. Junior also joined the Pathfinder club at his church. He joined a singing group at church, too. The evil spirits promised to stop Junior from getting baptized. But the boy's wish to get baptized only grew stronger. Mother also started to talk about getting baptized. Father got very upset at this news.

Pastor Ricardo set the date for Junior's baptism. Mother wanted to be baptized, too. When she told Pastor Ricardo, he said, "You can't be baptized because you're not married by law." Mother and Father lived together as husband and wife, but they weren't really married. Mother looked so sad. Pastor Ricardo said, "Don't worry. Ask Eduardo to marry you."

Tears flowed down Mother's cheeks as she left the church. She doubted Father was going to say yes. But she decided to ask him anyway. "I have a question. No matter what you say, I love you. Will you marry me?"

"No. I will never marry you," Father said.

Your 13th Sabbath Offering will help build eight churches in South America. Four of these churches will be built in Brazil, where Father (Eduardo Ferreira dos Santos) and his family live.

INSIDE
Story
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**"I will never marry you,"
Father said.**