# SS-Q4-L7-Blessed are Those Who Believe

November 9-15, 2024



# Sabbath Afternoon–November 9, 2024

## **Scripture Reading for the Week**

<u>John 8:54-58</u>; <u>Genesis 12:3</u>; <u>Romans 4:1-5</u>; <u>John 12:1-8</u>; <u>John 19:4-22</u>; <u>John 20:19-31</u>; <u>Daniel 2:1-49</u>; <u>Daniel 7:1-28</u>.

#### **Thought for Meditation**

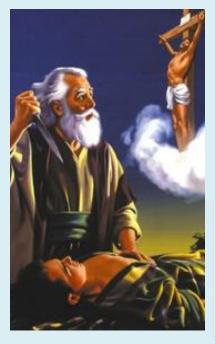
Every Person to Be Active in Soul Winning--Everyone who believes in Christ as a personal Saviour is under bonds to God to be pure and holy, to be a spiritual worker seeking to save the lost, whether they are great or small, rich or poor, bond or free. The greatest work upon earth is to seek and to save those who are lost [those] for whom Christ has paid the infinite price of His own blood. Every one is to do active service, and if anyone who has been blessed with light does not diffuse light to others, he will lose the rich grace which has been bestowed upon him, because he neglects a sacred duty plainly marked out in the Word of God. As his light diminishes,

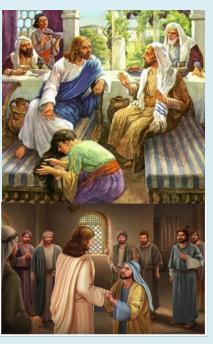
his own soul is brought into peril, and the ones to whom he should have been a shining light, miss the labor that God intended that they should have through the human instrument. Thus the sheep unsought is not brought back to the fold. **{12MR 239.1}** Manuscript Release Volume Twelve John came in the spirit and power of Elijah, to proclaim the first advent of Jesus. I was pointed down to the last days, and saw that John was to represent those who should go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah, to herald the day of wrath, and the second advent of Jesus. **{1SG 30.2}** spiritual Gifts Volume 1, 1858

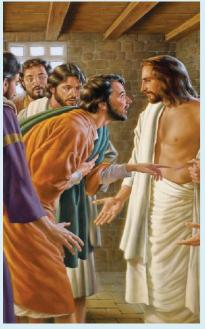
# Memory Verse

"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed' "(John 20:29).

"This week's Sabbath School lesson will examine the dynamic nature of belief in the biblical narrative, focusing on the experiences of key figures such as Abraham, Mary, Pilate, and Thomas. This study aims to explore the complexities of faith, doubt, and transformation in their encounters with the divine, and to understand how these themes shape the broader Christian concept of belief."







# **Outline of the Study**

## Sunday-November 10, 2024

Harking Back to Abraham-Believe by Faith

<u>John 8:56</u>, <u>57</u>, <u>58</u>, <u>59</u>; <u>Genesis 12:3</u>; <u>18:16-18</u>; <u>22:1-24</u>; <u>26:4</u>; <u>Matthew 1:1</u>; <u>Acts 3:25</u>; <u>Galatians 3:8</u>; <u>Romans 4:1-5</u>; <u>Hebrews 11:8</u>; <u>17-19</u>.

## Monday-November 11, 2024

The Witness of Mary-Believe and Give Thanks

John 12:1-8; 2:24-25; 6:70-71; 13:11; John 16:19.

## Tuesday-November 12, 2024

The Unwitting Witness of Pilate-Believe and Yield

John 2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 12:7, 23, 27; 13:1; 17:1; 18:38; 19:4-22.

#### Wednesday-November 13, 2024

The Witness of Thomas-Believe by Seeing

John 20:19-31; 3:4; 4:11; 6:30,

#### Thursday-November 14, 2024

**Our Witness of Jesus-Believing Without Seeing** 

John 20:30-31; Matthew 24:2; Matthew 24:14;

Matthew 24:6-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

## Friday-November 15, 2024

**Insights and Further Study** 

From the Pen of Inspiration

**Points to Ponder Upon** 

# The Testimony of John the Baptist

# Sunday-November 10, 2024

Harking Back to Abraham-Believe by Faith

<u>John 8:56, 57, 58, 59; Genesis 12:3; 18:16-18; 22:1-24; 26:4; Matthew 1:1; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:8; Romans 4:1-5; Hebrews 11:8; 17-19.</u>

"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56)









"Before Abraham Was, I AM: Jesus' Declaration of Divinity"
Christ's words concerning Abraham conveyed to His hearers no deep significance. The Pharisees saw in them only fresh ground for caviling. They retorted with a sneer, as if they would prove Jesus to be a madman, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?" {DA 469.3}

With solemn dignity Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM." {DA 469.4}

Silence fell upon the vast assembly. The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." **Micah 5:2,** margin. **{DA 469.5}** *The Desire of Ages, 1898* 

# "The Self-Existent One: Jesus' Claim to Divinity"

Here Christ shows them that, although they might reckon His life to be less than 50 years, yet His divine life could not be reckoned by human

computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures (Signs of the Times, May 3, 1899). {LHU 17.3}

"Before Abraham was, I am." Christ is the preexistent, self-existent Son of God. The message He gave to Moses to give to the children of Israel was, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." **{LHU 17.4}** *Lift Him Up, 1988* 

## "The Unseen Reality: Jesus' Claim to be the 'I AM'"

The Eternal Presence of God in Jesus (The Past, Present, and Future)

Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. **John 8:58. {TMK 12.1**}

I AM means an eternal presence; the past, present, and future are alike with God. He sees the most remote events of past history and the far distant future with as clear a vision as we do those things which are transpiring daily. We know not what is before us, and if we did, it would not contribute to our eternal welfare. God gives us an opportunity to exercise faith and trust in the great I AM. . . . Our Saviour says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Fifteen hundred years before Christ laid off His royal robe, His kingly crown, and left His position of honor in the heavenly courts, assumed humanity, and walked a man among the children of men, Abraham saw His day, and was glad. "Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (verses 57, 58). . . . {TMK 12.2} That I May Know Him, 1967

# **Consider the Following**

## ABRAHAM: Believe by faith.

- ❖ What did Jesus mean by the expression "seeing my day" (Jn. 8:56)?
- ❖ Abraham was aware that the promise given him (Gen. 22:18) did not refer only to his abundant descendants. It referred to the seed promised to Eve, that is, to the Savior of the world (Gen. 3:15).
- Unbeknown to him, Isaac represented Jesus, ascending the mountain carrying the wood on which he was to be sacrificed (Gen. 22:6).
- Only when he was stopped from sacrificing his son and the latter was replaced by a ram, did Abraham understand the mission of the Savior

(Gen. 22:11-14). By faith, he saw the day of Jesus Christ (His redemptive death), believed, and rejoiced.

The Great Name of GOD (Tetragrammaton name of God) - I AM

Christ was using the great name of God that was given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence **{See Exodus 3:14.}** Isaiah also saw Christ, and his prophetic words are full of significance. He says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" **(Isaiah 9:6).** Speaking through him, the Lord says, "I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. . . . Fear not: for I am with thee. . . . I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. . . . Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am he. . . . I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King" **(Isaiah 43:3-15).** . . . When Jesus came to our world, He proclaimed Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" **(John 14:6). . . . {TMK 12.3}** *That I May Know Him, 1967* 

# Monday-November 11, 2024

The Witness of Mary - Believe and Give Thanks John 12:1-8; 2:24-25; 6:70-71; 13:11; John 16:19.

Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume" (John 12:3)



"The Fragrance of Pure Love: Christ's Example of Sanctified Devotion" Pure, sanctified love, expressed by Christ's lifework, is as sacred perfume. Like an opened bottle of perfume, it fills the whole house with fragrance. Eloquence, an extended knowledge of the truth, outward devotion, rare talents, if mingled with sacred, humble love, will become as fragrant as the opened box of ointment. But gifts alone, ability alone, the choicest

endowments alone, cannot take the place of love [1 Corinthians 13:1-3

quoted] (MS 22, 1897). {5BC 1137.3} SDA Bible Commentary, volume 5, 1956

"The Sweet Fragrance of Christ's Love: Elevating Gifts with Humility" Filled with Gratitude Leads to a Personal Sacrifice. "Martha served at the table, but Mary was earnestly listening to every word from the lips of Jesus. In His mercy, Jesus had pardoned her sins, He had called forth her beloved brother from the grave, and Mary's heart was filled with gratitude. She had heard Jesus speak of His approaching death, and in her deep love and sorrow she had longed to show Him honor. At great personal sacrifice she had purchased an alabaster box of "ointment of spikenard, very costly," with which to anoint His body. But now many were declaring that He was about to be crowned king. Her grief was turned to joy, and she was eager to be first in honoring her Lord. Breaking her box of ointment, she poured its contents upon the head and feet of Jesus; then, as she knelt weeping, moistening them with her tears, she wiped His feet with her long, flowing hair. . . .{DG 60.3} Paughters of God, 1998

# **Consider the Following**

#### MARY: Believe and give thanks.

- Several reasons led Mary to offer Jesus an expensive perfume, and anoint him with it (Jn. 12:1-3):
  - Jesus had forgiven her sins (Lk. 7:44-48)
  - Jesus had raised her brother from the dead (Jn. 11:1-2)
  - Jesus had spoken of his death (Jn. 12:7)
- Simon, the host, thought only of her sins (Lk. 7:39). Judas thought only of the benefit he could have gained from such a costly gift (Jn. 12:4-6).
- But Jesus knew the hearts of all. He made Simon see his lack of gratitude. He told Judas not to use the poor as an excuse.
- ❖ He had only words of affection for Mary. He rewarded her faith by

reminding her that her sins were forgiven, and he praised her action before Judas and the others.

# Tuesday-November 12, 2024

The Unwitting Witness of Pilate-Believe and Yield

John 2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 12:7, 23, 27; 13:1; 17:1; 18:38; 19:4-22.

"What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him.'" (John 18:38)









#### "Pilate's Dilemma: The Suffering Savior and the Reluctant Ruler"

The Saviour, tottering with weariness, pale and wounded, wearing a robe of mockery and a crown of thorns, was mercilessly hurried back to the court of the Roman governor. Pilate was very much irritated; for he had congratulated himself on being rid of a fearful responsibility when he referred the accusers of Jesus to Herod. He now impatiently inquired of the Jews what they would have him do. He reminded them that he had already examined the prisoner and found no blame in him; that his accusers had failed to sustain a single charge against him; that he had sent Jesus to Herod, a tetrarch of Galilee, and one of their own nation, who also found nothing worthy of death against the prisoner. Said Pilate, "I will therefore chastise him and release him." {3SP 140.1}

#### "A Countenance of Heaven: Pilate's Witness to Divine Nobility"

Pilate looked at the men who had Jesus in charge, and then his gaze rested searchingly upon Jesus. He continued to look at him; for he could not do otherwise. He had had to deal with all kinds of criminals; but the countenance of the man before him bore the signature of heaven, not of a criminal. Never before had one bearing such marks of goodness and

nobility been brought before him. On his face Pilate saw no signs of guilt, no expression of fear, no boldness nor defiance. He saw a man of calm and dignified bearing, who heard the bitter accusations made against him without speaking a word to vindicate himself. {RH, November 7, 1899 par. 3} The Review and Herald

#### "Between Justice and Expediency: Pilate Faces the Innocent Christ"

When the Jews returned from Herod, bringing the Saviour again to Pilate, he was very much displeased, and asked what they would have him do. He reminded them that he had examined Jesus, and had found no fault in Him. He told them that they had brought complaints against Him, but that they had not been able to prove a single charge. **{SJ 133.1}** 

As stated in the preceding chapter, they had taken Him to Herod, who was a Jew, like themselves, and he had found in Him nothing worthy of death. But to pacify the accusers, Pilate said: **{SJ 133.2}** 

"I will therefore chastise Him, and release Him." Luke 23:16. {SJ 133.3} Here Pilate showed his weakness. He had acknowledged that Christ was innocent; then why should he punish Him? It was a compromise with wrong. The Jews never forgot this through all the trial. They had intimidated the Roman governor, and now pressed their advantage until they secured the condemnation of Jesus. {SJ 133.4} The Story of Jesus, 1896, 1900

# **Consider the following**

#### "This is a hard teaching." John 6:51-71

- ❖ After feeding the 5,000, the crowd believed Jesus was the Messiah and wanted to make Him king (Jn. 6:14-15). The next day, while He was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum, He spoke to them about the bread of life, awakening them to a desire to know more (Jn. 6:32-34).
- ❖ But it seems they did not want to hear deep spiritual truths. They wanted a king to lead them in their struggle against the Romans. They closed their minds and refused to follow Jesus, or to accept Him as a soul-regenerating and converting Messiah (John 6:60-66).
- When Jesus was forsaken, he spoke to the 12, allowing them to leave him too if they so desired (John 6:67). Their response reflects the feelings of all of us who have found in Jesus our Redeemer, our Liberator, our personal Savior: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have

the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68-69).

# Wednesday-November 13, 2024

The Witness of Thomas-Believe by Seeing

John 20:19-31; 3:4; 4:11; 6:30,

"Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

(John 20:27)







## "The Evidence of Faith: Thomas and the Blessing of Belief"

God was not pleased with the unbelief of Thomas. When Jesus again met with His disciples, Thomas was with them; and when he beheld Jesus, he believed. But he had declared that he would not be satisfied without the evidence of feeling added to sight, and Jesus gave him the evidence which he had desired. Thomas cried out, "My Lord and my God!" But Jesus reproved him for his unbelief, saying, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." **{EW 188.1}** 



## "From Doubt to Faith: The Transformation of Thomas"

Thomas' Stubborn Unbelief - Turn into Deep Affection and Devotion

He then reproved the unbelieving who had not received the testimony of those who had seen him, and, turning to Thomas, said, "Reach hither thy

finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." These words showed that he had read the thoughts and words of Thomas. The doubting disciple knew that none of his companions had seen Jesus for a week, and therefore could not have told the Master of his stubborn unbelief. He recognized the person before him as his Lord who had been crucified; he had no desire for farther proof; his heart leaped for joy as he realized that Jesus was indeed risen from the dead. He cast himself at the feet of his Master in deep affection and devotion, crying, "My Lord and my God." {3SP 221.1}

# "Overcoming Doubt with Love: The Transforming Power of Christ's Mercy"

In His treatment of Thomas, Jesus gave a lesson for His followers. His example shows how we should treat those whose faith is weak, and who make their doubts prominent. Jesus did not overwhelm Thomas with reproach, nor did He enter into controversy with him. He revealed Himself to the doubting one. Thomas had been most unreasonable in dictating the conditions of his faith, but Jesus, by His generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers. Unbelief is seldom overcome by controversy. It is rather put upon self-defense, and finds new support and excuse. But let Jesus, in His love and mercy, be revealed as the crucified Saviour, and from many once unwilling lips will be heard the acknowledgment of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." **{DA 808.1}** *The Desire of Ages, 1898* 

# **Consider the following**

#### THOMAS: Believing by seeing.

- Thomas was not present when Jesus appeared in the upper room after his resurrection (John 20:19, 24).
  - Although the apostles and other witnesses assured him they had seen the resurrected Jesus, Thomas did not believe them. Instead of accepting their testimony, he set his conditions for belief (John 20:25).
- ❖ Despite his unbelief, Jesus gave him new evidence by appearing before him, answering exactly the doubt he had expressed, and inviting him to believe (Jn. 20:26-27).
- ❖ Even with all the evidence God gives us to believe, there is always room for doubt. It is our choice to accept that evidence and believe in Him.

## Thursday-November 14, 2024

## **Our Witness of Jesus-Believing Without Seeing**

<u>John 20:30-31</u>; <u>Matthew 24:2</u>; <u>Matthew 24:14</u>; <u>Matthew 24:6-8</u>; <u>2</u> <u>Thessalonians 2:3</u>.

"[...] blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29b)



## 1. Faith and the Power of Belief Without Sight

In her book *Desire of Ages*, Ellen G. White discusses Thomas' doubt and Jesus' words about those who believe without seeing. In the context of Thomas, she emphasizes the blessedness of those who, though not seeing Jesus physically, believe in Him and His work through faith. **Desire of Ages, p. 805**:

"The words of Jesus were a rebuke to Thomas, but they were also a blessing to all who should live in the future. 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' In this brief sentence, Christ explained the relation of faith to the Christian life. Faith is not dependent on sight. If it were, it would not be faith. To the end of time, the faith of the believer must rest on the unseen and eternal realities, not on visible evidence."

Here, Ellen G. White reinforces the idea that faith in Jesus is not reliant on physical sight but is grounded in the unseen, eternal realities of God's truth.

#### 2. Believing in Christ Without Seeing Him

In the same book, she elaborates on the nature of faith, especially in the context of the gospel's spread through the testimony of believers. **Desire of Ages, p. 805**:

"The apostles, who had been with Christ, could testify to His divinity, and with them, those who came to believe in Christ would be blessed, though they had not seen Him in the flesh. The faith of these believers, built on the testimony of those who saw and heard Christ, would be as strong and genuine as the faith of the apostles themselves."

This passage reflects the idea that those who came to faith in Christ through the testimony of others, even without physical evidence, possess the same strong and genuine faith as those who saw Christ firsthand.

#### 3. The Role of Witnessing and Believing Without Seeing

In her writings, Ellen G. White also speaks about the power of witnessing for Jesus, even in the absence of direct evidence or sight, highlighting the spiritual sight given to believers through the Holy Spirit. **Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, p. 333:** 

"We are not to wait for feelings, for signs, or for the manifestation of special privileges before we act. The word of God is sufficient to guide us. As we walk in the light, faith in the unseen becomes more certain. Christ asks us to believe in His power and to be His witnesses, even when we cannot see His face, trusting in His word and in His promises."

Here, the emphasis is on faith that acts according to God's Word, without waiting for tangible signs or feelings, which aligns with the concept of believing without seeing.

#### 4. Faith and Assurance in Christ's Promises

Ellen G. White often writes about the assurance that comes with faith, even when the believer cannot physically see Jesus. This assurance is not based on sight but on the trust in God's promises. **Steps to Christ, p. 62:** 

"We walk by faith, not by sight. There is nothing in our experience that would assure us that God will fulfill His promises to us. But as we believe His word, we have the assurance that He will, and that assurance brings peace and joy. Our faith in Christ rests not upon the things that are seen, but on the eternal, unseen promises of God."

This passage speaks directly to the heart of the concept: true faith relies not on what can be seen or touched but on the promises of God that are believed, even in their unseen form.

#### 5. The Victory of Faith

Ellen G. White also links the victory of the Christian life with faith, particularly faith in Jesus' unseen presence and work in the world. **Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 746**:

"Those who are walking in the light of God's Word will not be moved by the changing circumstances of life. Though they cannot see Jesus with their natural eyes, they walk in His light, and their faith in His promises gives them victory over the world."

This passage emphasizes that, though believers cannot see Jesus physically, their faith in Him and in His promises grants them victory, showing the power of believing without seeing.

# Consider the following

## YOU AND I: Believing without seeing.

- What evidence does God give us to believe in Him?
- *Nature*: Although imperfect and affected by sin, nature teaches us the intelligent design with which it was endowed by its Creator.
- The Word of God: In the Bible, we find abundant testimonies of the powerful works of God in history and people. We have in it, especially, the testimony of Jesus himself.
- Prophecies: The fulfillment of prophecies that announced historical events many centuries before their fulfillment (Greece invading Persia; Tyre devastated; the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem; etc.)
- Personal Experience: How is our heart transformed? How have we seen God's hand at work? What answers do we get to our prayers?
- ❖ To believe, in short, is to see a greater reality that is beyond our immediate circumstances.

# Friday-November 8, 2024

#### **Insights and Further Study**

God has his workmen to carry on his work, and no man can carry the work beyond a certain point, because man will place his own mold upon it. It is natural for men to put their fashion upon the work; but when there is danger of this, the Lord calls other men whom he has ready, to carry forward the message; for the work must not become circumscribed by the influence of man. Other workmen must be brought in, to carry the work upward and forward as God shall direct, that the mold may not appear, and that the truth may not be crippled and dwarfed by the experience of the workers. The mold of man must be taken off the work. Too often the messenger that God has used comes to be depended upon, and to be placed where God should be, by the people; then God brings in another worker. He does not set the first one aside, for his experience and capabilities are all needed for the perfection of the work; but if the men whom God has used become jealous and envious, and imagine evil, they will not fill the place, but will stand directly in the way of the advancement of the work. Then the work will move without them, and that is a great blessing. {1888 545.3} The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 1987

# From the Pen of Inspiration

"becoming His followers. 'To whom shall we go?' Not from the teaching of Christ, His lessons of love and mercy, to the darkness of unbelief, the wickedness of the world. While the Saviour was forsaken by many who had witnessed His wonderful works, Peter expressed the faith of the disciples, —'Thou art that Christ.' The very thought of losing this anchor of their souls filled them with fear and pain. To be destitute of a Saviour was to be adrift on a dark and stormy sea." **EGW (The Desire of Ages, pg. 393)** 

# **Questions to Ponder upon**

- 1. How did John the Baptist exercise humility and submit to the circumstances where he needs to decrease?
- 2. How can we humble ourselves when we've already been humiliated in front of a crowd?
- 3. "What is the significance of the Spirit descending as a dove and remaining on Jesus, and how does this reveal His identity and purpose?"

- 4. "How does John's testimony about witnessing the Spirit reveal the way God confirms His calling in our lives?"
- 5. How might "eating the bread" relate to having eternal life? What does this symbolize in a spiritual sense?
- 6. Why do you think Jesus used such a strong metaphor ("my flesh") in His teaching here, and how might this have challenged His listeners?
- 7. Based on the statement above **{1888 545.3}**, "How does God ensure that His work remains guided by His will rather than being limited by human influence?"

#### Disclaimer

This Sabbath School Lesson, Meat in Due Season Advanced Commentary is not to replace, discredit, disapprove, or discriminate against what had been made by the Sabbath School Department of General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist but to uphold, advance, sustain, facilitate, clarify, and protect the essence of the truth taught in the Bible {Isa. 8:20} and the inspiration (through the Prophetic Ministration of Ellen G. White and another prophet she predicted in **TM 475**).

## For more information and inquiry

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Glory be to the Lord Jesus Christ, Our Coming King of kings!