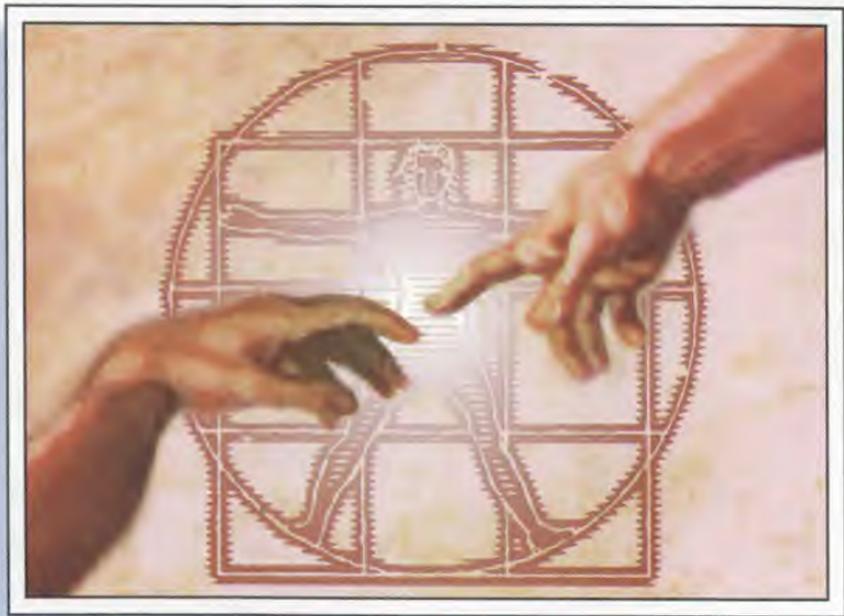




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SABBATH SCHOOL
BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

The Nature of Man



APR MAY JUN 1999

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Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide (ISSN 1096-7400) (Standard Edition). Published quarterly by Pacific Press® Publishing Association, 1350 N. Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687-3193, U.S.A. One-year subscription in U.S.A., \$7.50; single copy, \$3.95. One-year subscription to countries outside U.S.A., \$10.50; single \$3.95. All prices at U.S.A. exchange. Periodicals postage paid at Nampa, Idaho. When a change of address is desired, please send both old and new addresses.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide (Standard Edition), P.O. Box 5353, Nampa, ID 83653-5353. Printed in the United States of America.

Editions in Braille available. Contact Christian Record Services, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506.
Easy Reading Edition available. Contact Pacific Press®, 1350 N. Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687.

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Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide (ISSN 1096-7400)/No. 416/April-June 1998.

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The adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide is prepared by the Sabbath School/Personal Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The preparation of the guides is under the general direction of a worldwide Sabbath School Lesson Committee, the members of which serve as consulting editors. The published Bible Study Guide reflects the input of the committee and thus does not solely or necessarily represent the intent of the authors.		Condition in Death
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Meet the Principal Contributor to This Quarter's Bible Study Guide

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He chaired the theology departments at Solusi College, the graduate program at Philippine Union College, and taught theology at Columbia Union College, where he also served as academic dean. He also served as an associate editor of the *Review and Herald*. At the time of this writing he served as holder of the Ellen G. White Memorial Chair in Religion and as dean of the School of Religion at Southern Adventist University. He has written articles for *Adventist Review*, *Ministry*, and *The Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*. His best-known work is *The Clear Word (An Expanded Paraphrase of the Bible to Nurture Faith and Growth)*.

During World War II, Dr. Blanco spent three years in a German labor camp, returning home to the U.S. weighing only 80 pounds. During the Korean War he served in the United States Air Force. Dr. Blanco enjoys almost any kind of exercise, especially hiking and waterskiing. He is an avid reader. His hobbies include specialized stamp collecting from times of answered prayer or other significant experiences in his life and rock collecting from places geographically connected with the Bible or with Adventist mission work. Dr. and Mrs. Blanco have two children and two grandchildren.



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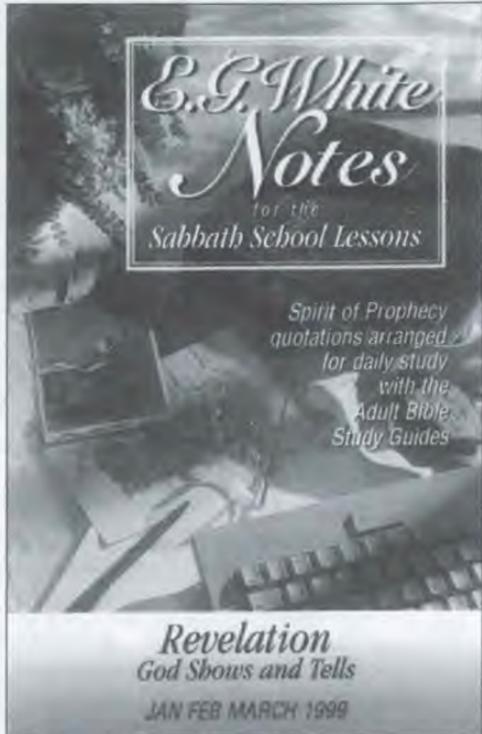


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The Nature of Man

The nature of men and women—how they came to be, what happened to change them from having been created “very good” (Gen. 1:31), their restoration, and their ultimate destiny—is becoming increasingly important as we near the second coming of Christ. Much confusion exists about this important subject, and it is the purpose of this quarter’s guide to focus on what the Scripture teaches.

Humankind did not spring out of nature by some natural evolutionary process, for according to Genesis, the creation of human beings is attributed directly to God. Men and women were created and formed by Him (Gen. 1:27; 2:7, 8). Also, while the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*Elohim*, plural for God) were involved in the creation process (Gen. 1:2, 26), Jesus was more directly involved. “All things were made through Him. . . .” (John 1:3, NKJV).

Even though there exists a close relationship between humans and nature, in contrast, humans were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), distinct and unique, with the capacity to “think God’s thoughts after Him” (*Education*, p. 17). People were of more value to Jesus than the birds and the beasts (Matt. 10:31; 12:12). He saw them as sons and daughters of God first by creation (Luke 3:38) and then by redemption (John 1:12; 3:16).

Satan deceived our first parents by using the serpent to lie about God (Gen. 3:1-5). He continues to lie about our loving God and uses any means he can to lead us to doubt His love. But Jesus came to save the world, not to condemn it. Furthermore, Satan lied to our first parents about their destiny. He told them that they would not die (Gen. 3:4). This was the beginning of the belief in the immortality of the soul and opened the door to such evils as spiritualism.

As we near the coming of Christ, Satan will intensify his efforts to deceive (Rev. 12:12) and to deceive even the very elect (Matt. 24:24). Jesus’ warning, “See, I have told you beforehand” (Matt. 24:25, NKJV), must be taken seriously. It is the context of the great controversy that makes this quarter’s topic so important.

“Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. . . . When our first parents disobeyed God . . . the image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker.”—“Fundamental Beliefs, 7.” Quoted in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*, edited under the direction of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1988), p. 78.

Created in the Image of God



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Gen. 1:26-31; 2:18-25.

MEMORY TEXT: “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27, NKJV).

KEY QUESTION: What does it mean to be created in God’s image?

CREATION AND DIGNITY. In Genesis 1:26, 27 “is clearly set forth the origin of the human race; and the divine record is so plainly stated that there is no occasion for erroneous conclusions. God created man in his own image. . . . There is no ground for the supposition that man was evolved, by slow degrees of development, from the lower forms of animal or vegetable life.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 44, 45.

The psalmist says, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Ps. 33:6); “For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (v. 9). God was not dependent upon pre-existing matter, but created this world out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). The universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made of things which appear (Heb. 11:3). If God had been indebted to pre-existing matter to create the universe, where would it have come from? Has matter always existed alongside God, there for Him to use? If that were true, who created matter originally? Where did it come from? From solidified gas or gel? But where did the gas or gel come from? As the Greek philosopher Aristotle pointed out, there must be a “first cause” or an “uncaused cause.” We believe that “first cause” is God.

CREATED TO LOOK LIKE GOD (Gen. 1:26; Ps. 139:14).

Scripture speaks of God in human terms having form (Exod. 24:10; Num. 12:8) with feet (Gen. 3:8; Exod. 24:10), hands (Exod. 24:11), mouth (Num. 12:8; Jer. 7:13), and heart (Hos. 11:8). We must be careful not to attribute to God the limitations of our physical nature, to become too anthropomorphic in visualizing the Creator. However, to say that God is completely different from us is just as wrong as to say that He is completely like us. Jesus said, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24, NKJV). A mediating position is found in the answer Jesus gave to Philip when he asked to see the Father. Jesus said, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:9, NKJV). While the context has reference to the character of the Father more than to His form, the comparison with the Father's tangible characteristics cannot be excluded. Those who wish to jettison all anthropomorphic characteristics of God are unable to explain how personal human beings can be brought into existence by an impersonal force.

"As man came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of lofty stature and perfect symmetry. His countenance bore the ruddy tint of health, and glowed with the light of life and joy. Adam's height was much greater than that of men who now inhabit the earth. Eve was somewhat less in stature; yet her form was noble, and full of beauty."
—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 45.

While in vision Ellen White "saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, 'If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist.'"
—*Early Writings*, p. 54.

Compare what Moses saw of God while on Mt. Sinai described in Exodus 33:17-23 with Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 6:13-16. How do you reconcile the two?

Not only did Jesus say to Philip "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father," but He also said, "I am going away and coming back to you. . . . I am going to the Father" (John 14:28, NKJV). "The Father's arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' Heb. 1:6."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 834.

Can you visualize God's arms encircling you and saying, "Welcome home"? What a thrill that will be! Aren't you glad that God is real?

CREATED TO THINK LIKE GOD (Job 38:1-7; Rom. 12:1, 2; Phil. 2:5-8).

In the Old Testament the term *heart* (*leb*) brings the total nature—emotional, volitional, and intellectual—of men and women together. It has a combined meaning we call “mind” (Deut. 15:9; Judg 5:15, 16) or “intellect” (Job 8:10; 12:3; 34:10) and is often used with the idea of a person’s thought or wish. In this sense, what is “in the heart” actually means “what is in the mind,” and what is in the mind makes men and women what they are. “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7, NKJV). Paul, on the other hand, does not employ such general terms; they are much more precise. He uses words such as *flesh* (*sark*) and *spirit* (*pneuma*) respectively to denote the ethical and higher aspects of man’s moral nature, as well as *soul* (*psyche*) to denote the principle of individual life and native rational ability, which of course has been affected by sin (Rom. 1:8; 8:6, 7; Eph. 4:17; Col. 2:18; 1 Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:15). (See H. D. McDonald, “Man, Doctrine of,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1984], pp. 676-680.)

After Adam and Eve sinned, what changes in their behavior indicated a change in their thinking? Gen. 3:8-13.

“Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made a captive of Satan, and would have remained so, forever, had not God specially interposed. . . . In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him ‘in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’ Colossians 2:3. But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 17.

Fact: “There is a way that seems right to a man. But its end is the way of death” (Prov. 14:12, NKJV).

Prayer: “Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name” (Ps. 86:11, NKJV).

Promise: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps. 119:105, NKJV).

Christian Education: “Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do.”—*Education*, pp. 17, 18.

CREATED TO REFLECT GOD (Lev. 11:44, 45; 1 Cor. 2:12-14; 1 Pet. 1:13-16).

Men and women were created with a spiritual dimension akin to the Creator. They were called to be holy as He is holy. The word *spirituality* is relatively new. It is not commonly used in biblical or theological dictionaries, and there is a reluctance to speak of spirituality without grounding it in Scripture. Expressions such as *spiritual formation*, *spiritual health*, and *spiritual discipline* can easily lead men and women to think of spirituality apart from personal obedience to the Word of God. In the past, expressions such as *holiness*, *holy living*, *godliness*, *walking with God*, *discipleship* were more acceptable because they emphasized commitment and a deepening relationship with Christ guided by Scripture. The penetration of secularism into every aspect of modern life and the surge of interest in spiritualism are cause for alarm.

Asceticism, reaching a higher spiritual state by rigorous self-denial, discipline, exclusivism, and contempt for the material world is not spirituality according to Scripture:

1. The biblical revelation of God leaves no place for human wisdom as in Eastern thought, nor for human reasoning as in Greek thought. The will of God has been given to us in Scripture. The Ten Commandments, written by the God of the covenant, gives us a very different orientation.

2. Christian spirituality is also Christ-centered. Scripture speaks of believers being *in Christ* and being *followers of Christ* in the sense of having a dynamic relationship with Jesus as Saviour and Lord that leads to continued spiritual growth assessed by reflecting Him.

3. True spirituality engenders fellowship, the communion of the saints, and loving our neighbor as ourselves. It means godliness and spiritual friendship reflected in the horizontal as well as the vertical dimension of existence. It means the embodiment of the love of God in the human heart for Him and for others. (See J. M. Houston, "Spirituality," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 1046-1050.)

Compare the expression "be ye holy for I am holy" in Leviticus 11:44, 45 with 1 Peter 1:13-16. In what way are they different and yet the same?

Application: Can a person continuing a life of sin such as adultery or dishonesty, without repentance and change, claim to have a spiritual relationship with Christ? Does what you do in the body have an impact on your soul, the spiritual part of you?

CREATED TO BE LIKE GOD (Mic. 6:8; Matt. 5:43-48; Acts 10:34, 35).

Throughout the Old Testament the concepts of men and women as unique and responsible individuals and as social and representative beings are clearly set forth. For example: Adam was a man and yet mankind. Old Testament writers see in him individuality and social solidarity. He is not viewed atomistically but as the representative of the whole human community. Similarly, Moses, Aaron, Phinehas, and others, such as the king and the high priest, embody in themselves the whole nation. From this perspective of racial solidarity it follows that Adam's sin affected not only himself but every man and woman who followed, both in themselves and in the whole range of their social relationships. Scripture teaches that God created the entire human species in Adam and Eve by empowering them to procreate and propagate "after their kind" (Gen. 1:12, 21, 25). The solidarity of the race and its solidarity with sin is seen in such passages as Psalm 58:3; Romans 5:12, 13; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Ephesians 2:3. (See H. D. McDonald, "Man, Doctrine of," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 677-679.)

List the six illustrations of the higher application of the law that Jesus gives in Matthew 5:21-47 that reveal the kind of relationship with others that reflects the character of God.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Note: In Matthew 5:48, Jesus is not speaking of perfection as absolute sinlessness. The word *perfect* (*teleios*) means full-grown or mature adult beings, such as trained and fully qualified professionals (compare 1 Cor. 13:11). Paul speaks of "them that are perfect" (1 Cor. 2:6) and of "as many as be perfect" (Phil. 3:15). At the same time, the apostle recognizes that there are always new heights to gain and that he himself has not reached the ultimate perfection (Phil. 3:12-14). (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 341.)

Application: "Ministers especially should know the character and works of Christ, that they may imitate Him; for the character and works of a true Christian are like His. . . . He is our pattern."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 549.

THE IMAGE BROKEN (Gen. 3:8-11; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:23).

There are different views as to how sin affected the nature of man. In the Augustinian-Calvinist view, men and women are totally depraved, totally dead, their will is not free to choose the good. Therefore, salvation is an act of God's irresistible grace and predestination of those who are chosen by Him to be the elect. Arminius and John Wesley, on the other hand, taught that Adam's sin had dire consequences and that each of us possesses a "natural propensity" to sin. At the same time they maintained that every man and woman still possesses free will and the ability to choose to ratify or to turn against this inborn direction by accepting Christ as their Saviour and the aid of the Holy Spirit to help them walk in the way of righteousness. In other words, men and women are sick and need the medicine of the Great Physician. (See H. D. McDonald, "Man, Doctrine of," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 680.)

Find three texts that show that our freedom to choose good—and thus reflect the image of God—has not been entirely lost by the entrance of sin.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Related to the question of freedom to choose the good is the question of what constitutes the moral image of God. Some biblical scholars make a distinction between the creation-image given to all men and the redemption-image given to the redeemed. Such theological distinctions are unwarranted. The practical question is: Was this moral image totally obliterated at the entrance of sin, leaving men and women totally depraved, or was the moral image simply shattered, leaving humans unable to restore it on their own? If the moral image of God in men and women had been totally obliterated, if Adam and Eve had fallen "totally flat" after they sinned, how could there be a succession of falls?

Reflect: "When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to choose another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. . . . Nothing can pluck us out of His hand."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 72.

FURTHER STUDY: Look up the word *Evolution* as listed in the *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* to understand some of the reasons God gives why this theory is unacceptable and not according to the biblical record. Also read the article entitled "Science and a Literal Creation" in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 46-63. Look up the phrase "Image of God" in the *Index* to better understand the meaning of that expression and read *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, Chapter 7, "The Nature of Man," which gives a more comprehensive view of the subject.

Discussion Questions:

1. Is it possible to be an evolutionist and also a biblical theist, to deny the miracles of Creation while maintaining the supernatural nature of the Christian message? If one does try to hold these two concepts in tension, does this not imply a kind of dualism in which the body is the product of evolution and the spiritual capacity is given by God? Can there be harmony between evolution with its philosophical concept of a closed universe and the biblical concept of divine intervention and sovereignty? Are these two concepts not mutually exclusive?
2. Is there a difference between the creation-image of God conferred on the whole human race and the redemption-image of God given to the redeemed? If the creation-image distinguishes the human race from the animals and the redemption-image distinguishes regenerate men and women from the unregenerate, is there something given to the regenerate that was not included in the creation-image given to everyone? Does this mean that the entrance of sin gave men and women something that they would not have had, had they not sinned?
3. What physical, mental, and spiritual activities and moral qualities are included in imaging God? Are men and women of faith able to reflect the character of God, having inherited a sinful nature? Are there degrees to which believers can mirror God? What are they? Are they all acceptable?

SUMMARY: The Bible teaches that God created all things out of nothing. He did not use evolution to create humans but molded Adam from clay and breathed into him the breath of life.



A Baby Named Adra

Constance Strahle

Working in the field with ADRA International is anything but boring. During the 15 months I spent working in public health in south Sudan, broken bones, malaria, and other hardships threatened our work. But some experiences made it all worthwhile. This was one of them.

Six of us crammed into ADRA's tiny utility vehicle for the eight-hour trip to the ADRA base camp in South Sudan. The rain-rutted roads made travel painful at best. Halfway to our destination we were stopped by a roadblock. When the base commander saw us he asked us to examine a Dinka woman who had been in labor for five days. George, a Kenyan nurse, and I examined her and agreed to take her to a hospital four hours away.

We squeezed back into the jeep and continued our journey. Two hours later Mary, the expectant mother, began to fidget and perspire. George suggested we stop and examine her again. We laid my bed sheet on the tall savanna grass beside the road and examined Mary again. The baby was coming—now!

George quickly went to work, but Mary delivered a baby boy before we were ready. I cleaned my knife and George cut the cord. Soon she delivered a second baby, a girl. But the tiny girl was not breathing. I wrapped the baby boy in my bath towel while George worked on the little girl. After several minutes the little girl began to breathe on her own!

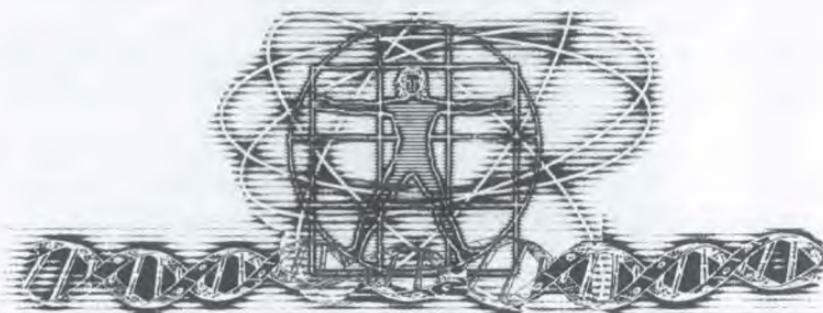
After Mary had rested a bit we loaded her and the twins into the back of the vehicle. George rode with our new passengers in the jeep, and the rest of us began walking toward our destination. When we reached camp, long after dark, we learned that Mary's husband had met his new family at the hospital. When he heard the day's story, he promptly named his new son Adra.

Suddenly the long trip that day hadn't seemed so tiring after all.



Mary with Baby Adra and his sister (left). Constance Strahle was serving as Immunization Coordinator with ADRA/South Sudan when she met Mary. ADRA photo.

Our Physical Nature



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Ps. 8:1-9.

MEMORY TEXT: “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19, NKJV).

KEY QUESTION: How is our physical well-being related to being created in God's image?

A MOST MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE! In his book *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made: A Surgeon Looks at the Human and Spiritual Body*, Dr. Paul Brand shares insightful descriptions of the functions of various parts of the human body. Regarding our body's cells, Dr. Brand comments that while cells are the same in terms of their construction, they specialize in function. Each cell carries the entire instruction book of 100,000 genes. Our DNA is so compacted that all our cells could fit into a small ice cube. Yet, if they could be unwound and joined together to make a strand, they would stretch from the earth to the sun and back more than 400 times.

It is estimated that our DNA contains instructions that, if written out, would fill a 1600-page book. A nerve cell may operate according to instructions from volume 4, while a kidney cell operates from volume 25. But both carry the whole book with them.—Adapted from Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, “Unity,” *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), pp. 44, 45.

This week, determine with God's help to keep your magnificent temple, created in His image as His masterpiece, functioning smoothly.

MOLDED FROM CLAY (Gen. 2:7; 3:17-19; Eccles. 3:19, 20).

Contrast how God created the animals on the fifth and sixth day with how He created Adam. Gen. 1:20-23, 24, 25; 2:7.

The Hebrew word we translate as “formed” in Genesis 2:7 implies an act of molding and fashioning corresponding to the design the Creator had in mind. It is similar to the work of a potter that Isaiah describes in Isaiah 29:16 and 49:5. Then God breathed life into this clay model of Adam, and he became a living being (Gen. 2:7). Imagine, for a moment, the awesome sight of the Creator God working the wet clay with His hands, and then with His mouth, breathing His life into Adam’s nostrils. What an amazing sight!

Compare and contrast the description of the creation of Adam given in Genesis 1:26, 27 with Genesis 2:7. Why are there two accounts of his creation?

Explain the significance of God breathing into lifeless Adam the “breath of life.”

At first glance, the description in Genesis 2:7 is quite different from the description in Genesis 1. This does not mean there are two different accounts of Creation as some scholars think. Rather, Genesis 2 develops and explains what is in Genesis 1. The message of the Scriptures is that even though human beings are created in God’s image, they are still creatures of earth. For Adam and Eve, to be created in the image of God does not mean they were immortal and partly divine. They were of the dust of the ground. Their loyalty to divine principles must be tested before they could be given immortality.

In the work of creation, humanity arose out of the dust by God’s power. In the Fall, however, humanity returns to the dust by its own failure. Symbolically, all that leads to higher ground is the work of God. All that leads to degradation is the work of sinful humanity.

In what ways do you sense your dependence on God? What makes you conscious of your human limitations and weaknesses?

Describe how you have experienced or are experiencing God’s creative power. What should realizing this do to our human pride? What should it do for men and women who love God?

AFFECTED BY SIN (Gen. 3:16-19).

List four ways sin affected Adam and Eve physically. Gen. 3:16-19.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Before the Fall, Eve and Adam could “freely” eat the produce of the Garden. Afterward, Adam was to till the ground to obtain food. Neither was the condition of the land what God intended it to be. Thorns and thistles sprang up, and it no longer yielded what it produced of itself.

Symbolically, the importance of what we eat is associated with our relationship with God. The harvest feasts in the Old Testament were to celebrate God’s gift of “the good land” of the covenant. And the eating of bread made without leaven pointed back to a life without sin.
—Adapted from *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, Frank E. Gaebelein, ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), pp. 56, 57.

Explain how the promise of hope God gave to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:14-16 relates to the promise of a new heaven and a new earth in Revelation 21:1-5.

Genesis 3:15 was the first promise of redemption, the first glimmer of hope for Adam and Eve. God would send His Son to take their sin upon Himself, die in their place, and give them another opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to Him by accepting the Son of God as their Saviour and Lord, then committing their lives in loving obedience to their Creator. Inherent in this promise was the eventual restoration of the earth as God had intended it to be. Calvary stands at the crossroads of history as a fulfillment of the promise given and of the assurance that God’s promises cannot fail.

Calvary also stands at the many crossroads of your life. In what ways does Christ’s victory over Satan affect your daily activities? How does Calvary assure you that God’s promises cannot fail?

NONE OF THESE DISEASES (Exod. 15:26).

List some of the diseases in Deuteronomy 7:14, 15 and 28:27, 28 that were prevalent among the Egyptians.

Egyptian doctors were famous for their healing arts. Ancient medical books divided diseases into three classes: (1) those that could be treated, (2) those that could be arrested, and (3) those that could not be cured.

A surgical casebook from the Edwin Smith papyrus lists 48 surgical cases along with their observations on the procedure of examination, diagnosis, and treatment. Common diseases included arthritic conditions, arteriosclerosis, tuberculosis, meningitis, syphilis, and smallpox. The Egyptians were pioneers in utilizing animal secretions such as blood and bile in therapeutics and the fats of birds and animals as the base of some emollients. Nevertheless, Egyptian medicine was closely connected with religion. Many of their gods were credited with the power of healing.

The Israelites credited God with the power to heal. But they also regarded disease as conditioned by moral and spiritual factors, and they accepted the major ailments as the result of personal sin and rebellion.—*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Edgar W. Smith, Jr., ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1979), vol. 1, pp. 954, 955.

Which individuals had the following health concerns?

Circulatory—1 Sam. 25:36-38 _____

Paralysis—1 Kings 13:4-6 _____

Physical deformities—2 Sam. 21:20 _____

Blindness—1 Kings 14:4 _____

“Disease has been transmitted from parents to children, from generation to generation. Infants in the cradle are miserably afflicted because of the sins of their parents, which have lessened their vital force. Their wrong habits of eating and dressing, and their general dissipation, are transmitted as an inheritance to their children.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 140.

If you and your spouse are considering having a child, what health habits should you change in preparation?

HEALTH AND HEALING (Ps. 103:1-5).

From God's perspective, why is health so important? To what does the apostle John compare the value of good health? 3 John 2.

The Greek word translated "in good health" means to practice hygiene, to be sound. This is how the physician Luke uses the word (Luke 5:31; 7:10; 15:27). God is interested in our well-being. There is a close relationship between the mind, body, and soul or character. Each influences the other. When we neglect our body's health, our spiritual life suffers. And when we neglect our spiritual health, our mind and body suffer. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 695.)

"Courage, hope, faith, sympathy, love, promote health and prolong life. A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul. 'A merry [rejoicing] heart doeth good like a medicine.'"—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 241. "Too little attention is generally given to the preservation of health. It is far better to prevent disease than to know how to treat it when contracted."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 128.

Beside each of the eight principles of health, write a goal for yourself. (See *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 127).

Nutrition _____

Exercise _____

Water _____

Sunshine _____

Temperance _____

Air _____

Rest _____

Trust in God _____

How much do you value health? Why? If it is simply health for health's sake, then what do you do more than others? Are there not secular people who are interested in health? What, then, is the difference between them and those of us who follow Scripture?

BODY TEMPLES (2 Cor. 6:16-18).

Since the bodies of believers are sacred shrines of the Holy Spirit, we must not pollute them. God gave us our bodies. Therefore, every sin committed against our bodies is a sin against our Maker and against the Holy Spirit (see John 14:16, 17). God places a high value on humans as shown by the price He was willing to pay for them. Because Christ purchased us with His life, we have an obligation to honor Him in all we do. This includes keeping our bodies morally pure and in the best condition possible.

What comparison or spiritual application can you find between Christ's act of cleansing the temple and the Holy Spirit's cleansing of our lives? How do you find such an application helpful to you? Matt. 21:12, 13; Mark 11:15, 16.

Paul contrasts the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) with the fruit of the Spirit (vv. 22, 23). Why does Paul speak of the fruit (singular) of the Spirit, then list nine different kinds? Gal. 5:22, 23.

The fruit of the Spirit suggests that which is the natural product of the Holy Spirit rather than the natural product of men and women. It suggests that these nine qualities are a unity, like a bunch of grapes, instead of separate pieces of fruit. To some degree, all these qualities exist in all true Christians, depending on the rate of a person's spiritual growth. Thus, the fruit differs from the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12), which the Spirit gives to different people as the church needs them.

The fruit of the Spirit falls into three categories of three each: (1) habits of mind, primarily God-ward; (2) relationships with others and social graces; and (3) concerns about how the Christian is to be in himself or herself.—Adapted from *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, p. 498.

Personal assessment: How many of your habits of mind are God-ward? How do you see your relationships with others and your social graces?

Do you find that you manifest some of the nine virtues more than others? If so, what are your strong ones and weak ones? What can you do to strengthen the weak ones? Should all these virtues be equally strong in each of us? Explain your answer.

FURTHER STUDY: Read Daniel 1. What does this prophet's experience teach us about the connection between maintaining our physical well-being and our relationship with God?

Also read *The Ministry of Healing*, "General Hygiene," pp. 271-286.

"Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings—as much a duty as it is to pray. If we are heaven-bound, how can we go as a band of mourners, groaning and complaining all along the way to our Father's house?"

"Those professed Christians who are constantly complaining, and who seem to think cheerfulness and happiness a sin, have not genuine religion. Those who take a mournful pleasure in all that is melancholy in the natural world, who choose to look upon dead leaves rather than to gather the beautiful living flowers, who see no beauty in grand mountain heights and in valleys clothed with living green, who close their senses to the joyful voice which speaks to them in nature, and which is sweet and musical to the listening ear—these are not in Christ. They are gathering to themselves gloom and darkness, when they might have brightness, even the Sun of Righteousness arising in their hearts with healing in His beams."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 251.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. After studying this week's lesson, how would you answer the Key Question in Sabbath's lesson? What Bible texts would you use to support your answer?
2. Reread the information in Sabbath's lesson about our body's cells. Based on this information, what applications can you make regarding the diverse and unified function of the church—the body of Christ?

SUMMARY: What affects the body easily affects the mind. And what affects the mind easily affects the body. Because God created our bodies and because He dwells in us through the Holy Spirit, we should strive, with His help, to maintain optimum physical and mental health.



God Honors A Man of Faith

J. H. Zachary

Vincente Cumbe shared his dream with the small group of believers who worshiped in a garage in a suburb of Quito, Ecuador. While visiting in North America, he had seen lovely churches with Sabbath School rooms for the children. He wanted to build a church in his city that would seat 450 people. "It will have Sabbath School rooms for the children and enough land for a school as well."

The members of his small congregation tried to discourage their elder. "How can we afford such a large church, and how will we ever have that many believers?" they asked.

But Vincente would not give up his dream. "My God is able," he answered. The income from his little vegetarian restaurant and bakery was small. "Lord, help us find a new product to sell, and I will give a second tithe for the new church," he prayed. He and his wife, Laura, began selling fresh fruit juice. At first his sales were only about \$8.00 a day, but Vincente and Laura continued to pray, and promised God 20 percent of their income after their tithe. The Lord blessed, and the new juice business grew. So did their offerings for the new church. Today their fruit business grosses \$400 a day.

Vincente spent many hours searching for land. But after several landowners refused to sell, he became frustrated. One night he lay awake praying. "I'm not going to look for land any longer, Lord. If You want a church in this part of the city, send a landowner to me."

Three days later a stranger offered Vincente an excellent piece of land at a good price. The land was large enough to build a large church plus an elementary school.

Early in 1997 a group of Maranatha volunteers from the United States flew to Ecuador and helped the believers begin construction of the church's main shell. As funds came in, the believers continued to work on their church. Then in July 1997 the congregation sponsored its first evangelistic meeting, and the company grew to 70 members.

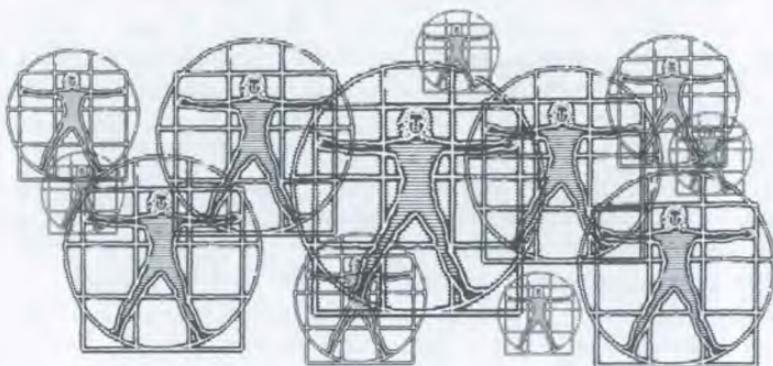
Even as the believers work to finish their new church, Vincente Cumbe believes that one day this church will be too small.

Vincente Cumbe (left). J. H. Zachary is international evangelism coordinator for The Quiet Hour in Redlands, California.



Produced by the General Conference Office of Mission Awareness
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Our Social Nature



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:18-22; Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 2:51, 52; John 2:1-12; Eph. 3:14, 15.

MEMORY TEXT: "A man who has friends must himself be friendly" (Proverbs 18:24, NKJV).

KEY QUESTION: What can we learn about our social nature from the interrelationship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

GOD'S IMAGE IN PLURALITY. The word *Our* in Genesis 1:26 reveals that the Deity possesses plurality, while the word *His* in verse 27 reveals that the plurality of God does not cancel out the Godhead's unity. God is triune, three Persons, yet so united they are One.

This image of God in humanity does not mean that the human race is simply "a collection of individuals, all possessing their own separate image. . . . The interrelationship of the Father, Son, and Spirit as Three-Persons-in-One suggests that the image of God and therefore the nature of humanity is to be found in the constitution of human beings as *social* beings. . . . To be human is to be-in-relation."—*New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*, David J. Atkinson and David F. Fields, eds. (Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995), p. 25.

As you study this week's lesson, always keep in mind that as a Christian, you are part of a great worldwide family. Because of the Father's love for us, we are all sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ (1 John 3:1).

CREATED FOR COMPANIONSHIP (Gen. 2:18; Eccles. 4:7-12; John 8:29).

List the disadvantages of being alone and the advantages of having a friend. Eccles. 4:7-12.

The expression "It is not good that man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18) included all human beings, not just Adam. While the context of Genesis 2:18 is Creation week and the relationship of a man and a woman as husband and wife, the principle found in this verse applies to all humans, regardless of their status.

God did not create us to be alone and certainly not to ever feel lonely. He created us for companionship either through the marriage relationship, family, friendships, or all three.

A number of factors contribute to loneliness in modern society. Secularism, individuality, achievement, acquisitions, and appearance are some of the main culprits. Secularism cuts people off from any sense of ultimate purpose and relationship with God.

On the other hand, a number of factors contribute to cutting us off from one another. These factors include our attempts at individualism, achievements, acquiring possessions, and maintaining appearances; they cut us off from meaningful relationships with each other. Divorce, relocation, retirement, and death are other common causes of loneliness. (See *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, David G. Benner, ed. [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1985], p. 656.)

Explain Jesus' answer to loneliness found in John 8:29. What happened to Him on Calvary? Matt. 27:46.

In Gethsemane, when the guilt of the world's sin was placed upon Jesus, He began to fear that He would be cut off from His Father's love forever. On Calvary, He experienced what He feared and cried out, "My God, why have you forsaken Me?" It was not the spear thrust in His side nor the cruelty of the cross that caused His death. He died of a broken heart when His Father separated Himself from His Son. The Son of God was slain by the sin of the world and in this sense tasted the second death for all who would accept Him as their wonderful Saviour and Lord.

What other characteristics about modern life have the tendency to make us lonely? How does knowing that Christ experienced the ultimate in loneliness help to ease any loneliness you might be feeling now?

COMPANIONSHIP IN MARRIAGE (Gen. 2:21-25; Eph. 5:22-33).

Describe what the words *leave* and *cleave* mean in Genesis 2:24.

"Adam knows that this creature, whom God has shaped with his assistance, out of his flesh, is unique, but he sees this action of his upon the other entirely as a gift of God. The fact that Eve derives from him is in Adam's eyes not a cause for glorification but for special gratitude. He does not put forward any claim for himself: he knows that he is connected in a completely new way to this Eve, who derives her existence from him. It is best to describe this unity by saying that now he belongs to her because she belongs to him. They are no longer without one another; they are one and yet two."—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1959), p. 60.

Explain the value a husband should place on his wife. Eph. 5:25-33.

"The marriage relationship is now set out as being a reflection of the relationship between Christ and his church. This is to raise it to an unimaginably lofty level. In 1 Corinthians 11:12 Paul had already marked out a hierarchy in which God is seen as the head of Christ, Christ as the head of man, and the man as the head of the woman. Here he looks at it from another angle. If the head of the woman is the man and the head of the church is Christ (Eph. 1:22; 4:12, 16), then it is permissible to draw an analogy between the wife's relationship to her husband and the church's relationship to Christ. Marriage is thus interpreted in the sublimest terms. It is compared with the marriage of the Lamb to his bride."—*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, p. 75.

Because God meant for Adam and Eve to complement one another, both found wholeness in their relationship. It is a miracle that two separate wills should achieve such unity. Because each person feels that life seems valueless without the other, both are eager to make sacrifices for one another.

Your young son or daughter is contemplating marriage to a special friend. Based on today's lesson, what advice would you give?

One plus one, according to the rules of simple addition, equals two. But when a man and a woman are united by God in marriage, how does the equation of two people joined together add up to one, as well as two? Explain your answer based on God's creation of Adam and Eve.

BROKENNESS (Mal. 2:10-17; Matt. 19:1-9).

Explain why God refused to accept the offerings of His people. Mal. 2:10-17.

God had long borne with Israel's complaining and discontent. Divine patience had reached an end. The prosperity and glory the people had hoped would come had not arrived. Thus they questioned the justice and holiness of God, even the certainty of His future judgment. They made it *appear* they were good. They believed that because to a certain degree they prospered, God approved of them. They did not deny their faith or turn against God. But they doubted He was really concerned with their character.

Why did God allow Moses to grant divorce when it is so disruptive to the human spirit, the family, and the community? Matt. 19:7, 8.

Before God gave them the law regarding divorce (Deut. 24:1-4), the Israelites did what was common in the ancient world. They divorced their wives simply by ordering them out of the house. Any woman unattached to either her father or husband was considered a disgrace and had to fend for herself in an unsympathetic society. Hoping to improve things, God commanded that a woman be given a certificate identifying her as divorced so she might legally and properly become the wife of another without any stigma. Thus the law was not intended to sanction divorce but to modify a harmful custom with a view to protecting a woman from a capricious husband. (See *SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 275.)

God never approved of the practice of divorce or of polygamy but worked with His people to gradually wean them away from such practices. The laws He gave Moses were designed not to immediately abolish polygamy but to strongly discourage it (Lev. 18:18; Deut. 17:17). Other laws He gave restricted divorce (Deut. 22:19, 29; 24:1) and elevated the standard of married life (Exod. 20:14, 17; Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). Christ made it clear that provisions for a plurality of wives and divorce were not ideal and certainly not part of God's plan. As with other instructions God has given us, He is gently leading us toward the Eden ideal. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1002.)

What can we do as Seventh-day Adventists to help prevent divorce and to assist in alleviating the hurt, pain, and loneliness that results when it does occur?

FELLOWSHIP (1 John 1:1-3).

Why did John write his epistle? And what does he mean by having fellowship? 1 John 1:1-3.

The Greek word for fellowship means “sharing a common life,” a “partnership,” “communion,” “participation,” etc. Ancient literature speaks about it as joint owners of a piece of property or shareholders in a common enterprise. In the New Testament, it means (1) sharing in a supernatural life, a born-again life with other believers, and (2) a relationship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Christian fellowship has both a vertical and a horizontal dimension—fellowship with God (vertical) and with others (horizontal). This means that we are a community of believers and that as such we are bearers of the Word of God and the Spirit of Christ. We are part of the fellowship as soon as the Father grants us the gift of the Holy Spirit. (See *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 12, p. 307.) This is the personal, intimate, and invigorating fellowship John wishes all believers to have. It is the same kind of fellowship that he had with Jesus here on earth.

What principles regarding fellowship can you glean from Acts 2:40-47 and 4:32-35? How can you put these principles to work where you live? What was the result of the outworking of these principles? Acts 2:43, 47; 4:33.

“Those who truly love God . . . will find that Christian society and conversation is food to the soul, that in the society of those who love God they breathe in the atmosphere of heaven. Christians will exercise love and sympathy one for another. The encouragement given one to another, the esteem manifested one for another, the helps, the instruction, the reproofs, warnings, the Christian counsel that should be found among the followers of Christ will further them in the spiritual life; for Christian fellowship is according to God's plan.”—*My Life Today*, p. 216.

In what sense are you and your fellow Christians shareholders in a common enterprise?

Based on John's definition of fellowship, how would you rate your fellowship with God? With others? If neither is what it should be, what can you do to make it better?

COMMUNITY (Luke 10:25-37; Matt. 25:31-46).

Contrast the attitude of the priest and the Levite with that of the Samaritan. Luke 10:30-35.

The man who was robbed and beaten was a Jew who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. The Samaritan knew that if he had been the victim and a Jew was passing by, he could expect no mercy. At considerable risk to himself, he stopped to help the Jew. The attitude of the priest and Levite toward one of their own people stands in sharp contrast to this Samaritan.

Read John 4:9, 8:48, and Luke 9:51-56. The compassion and mercy the kind Samaritan showed toward someone from another race is all the more remarkable considering the hatred that existed on both sides toward each other. In those days, to be called a Samaritan was like being called a devil.

Compare the parable of the good Samaritan with the parable of the sheep and the goats. Describe their similarities and differences. Matt. 25:31-46.

On the Mt. of Olives, Christ gave His disciples a picture of the great judgment day. "And He represented its decision as turning upon one point. When the nations are gathered before Him, there will be but two classes, and their eternal destiny will be determined by what they have done or have neglected to do for Him in the person of the poor and suffering. . . .

"Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their lives. . . . Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God."

—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 637, 638.

What are some of the needs your fellow human beings have that you can supply? Is it only food, shelter, and clothing? Or is it also acceptance, a sense of belonging, and a feeling of appreciation? How are you supplying these needs to your family, neighbors, and fellow citizens in general?

FURTHER STUDY: Compare Zechariah 7:8-14 with Matthew 25:31-46. Read *The Adventist Home*, "Our Social Needs," pp. 455-458.

"Among all the creatures that God had made on the earth, there was not one equal to man. And 'God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him' (Genesis 2:18). Man was not made to dwell in solitude; he was to be a social being. Without companionship, the beautiful scenes and delightful employments of Eden would have failed to yield perfect happiness. Even communion with angels could not have satisfied his desire for sympathy and companionship. There was none of the same nature to love and to be loved."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. After studying this week's lesson, how would you answer the Key Question in Sabbath's lesson? How can you apply your answer to your own life?
2. In Genesis 1:27 we read that "God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; *male and female He created them*"(emphasis supplied). What does the last part of this verse tell us about the social aspect of God's creation of our first parents?
3. What expressions in the Lord's Prayer emphasize our social nature? Matt. 6:9-13.
4. Jesus is not ashamed to call His followers brothers and sisters (Heb. 2:11). What does this tell you about Him?
5. In *The Desire of Ages*, page 524, we are told that "at the home of Lazarus, Jesus had found rest. The Saviour had no home of His own; He was dependent on the hospitality of His friends and disciples. . . . He longed for human tenderness and affection." What lessons may we learn from this about Christian sociability and fellowship?

SUMMARY: Being created in the image of God means we are social beings. Fellowship with God and one another helps us to enjoy life and share the love of Christ with those who need it most.



A Change of Plans

Lixberth Ruiz Adames

Lixbert Ruiz had taught for years, but now he was returning to school to study theology. As he packed his bags for the trip to the Adventist university in Medellin, the telephone rang. It was the president of the local conference.

"We need someone to go to La Cumbre district to plant a church. Would you consider this call?" Before he hung up, Ruiz accepted the call.

The Ruiz family moved to La Cumbre. Most of the 10,000 people who live in the region farm small plots of land or work in the villas of landowners who live in the city.

Ruiz met 75-year-old Jaime Hincapie (HAI-meh een-CAH-peh), a cobbler who lives in the center of town. The old man surprised Ruiz. "I have been expecting you. My God has sent you here for a great purpose."

Hincapie is a respected leader of the community. Even though his eyesight is failing, he faithfully reads the Bible. He accepted the "Faith of Jesus" bible lessons that Ruiz offered him, studying two or three lessons a week. When he saw the Bible study on the Sabbath, he went into his house and returned with an old Voice of Prophecy certificate. "I know that the Sabbath is the true day of rest!"

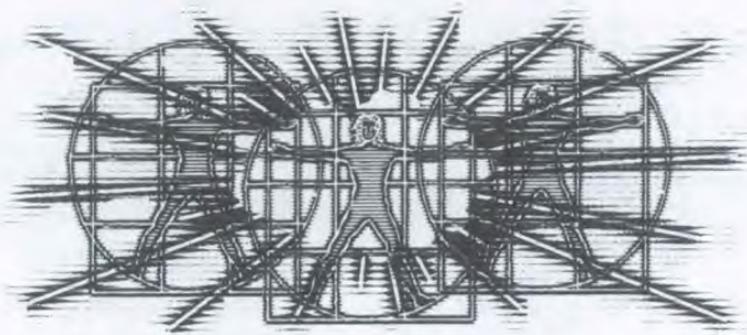
Through Hincapie, Ruiz met many citizens of La Cumbre. He offered them the Bible study guides and a copy of El Centinela magazine. Within three months 110 people were studying the Bible course. A group of Adventists from Cali came on Sabbaths to help Ruiz study with the Bible students, and within a few months 75 had completed the Bible course.

At a special ceremony where the Bible students received their certificates, a call to follow Jesus in baptism brought positive responses from many of the students. Jaime Hincapie wants to be the first to be baptized. He has offered his small home and property in the center of town for a church.

Professor Ruiz thinks it was worth changing his study plans in order to share the gospel with people who were waiting in La Cumbre. He challenges you: "Is God calling you to change your plans so that others can hear God's good news?"

Lixberth Ruiz Adames taught primary and secondary school for 25 years. Today he is a lay worker in Colombia.

Spirit, Soul, Body



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Gen. 2:7; Matt. 10:28; 1 Thess. 5:23.

MEMORY TEXT: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23, NKJV).

KEY QUESTIONS: What does it mean that humans are composed of spirit, soul, and body? How do these parts function as a whole? How do they function in terms of our relationship with God and our fellow humans?

ONE INDIVISIBLE WHOLE. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7, NKJV).

Scripture gives us a simple equation for understanding the nature of humans: Body (dust of the ground; the earth's elements) plus Breath of life ("spirit" of life from God) equals A living person (a soul).

Nowhere does the Bible speak of the soul as an immortal entity capable of living apart from our body. Neither does it speak of the spirit as an entity which can exist independent of our physical nature. We are not made of independent parts temporarily connected, but of body, soul, and spirit in one indivisible whole.

As you study this week's lesson, develop an outline that will help you answer the Key Questions listed above.

SPIRIT (Judg. 15:19; Eccles. 12:7; Luke 10:21).

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *ruach* occurs 377 times and is translated “wind,” “breath,” or “spirit” (Gen. 8:1), “life principle” (Gen. 6:17; 7:22), “courage” (Josh. 2:11), “vitality” or “strength” (Judg. 15:19), “disposition” (Isa. 54:6), and “moral character” (Ezek. 11:19).

The “spirit” or “breath” of a person is identical with the “spirit” or “breath” of animals (Eccles. 3:19). This “spirit” or “breath” of a person returns to God at the time of death, and the body returns to the dust where it came from (Job 34:14; Eccles. 12:7). It is also translated “Spirit of God” (Isa. 63:10). In the New Testament the Greek word *pneuma* is similarly translated as “spirit” or “to breathe.” It is also translated as “mood,” “attitude,” or “state of feeling” (Rom. 8:15; 1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 John 4:6). Like *ruach*, it is sometimes translated “Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:11, 14; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 2:4; 1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:21).

Neither in the Old Testament nor the New Testament does *ruach* or *pneuma* refer to an intelligent entity capable of existence apart from the body. (See *SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 1040.)

How does your Bible translate the words *ruach* and *pneuma* in the following passages?

Judges 15:19 _____

Job 34:14 _____

Ecclesiastes 12:7 _____

Romans 8:15 _____

2 Timothy 1:7 _____

It is helpful when trying to understand what happens to a person at death to study Genesis 2:7 and Ecclesiastes 12:7 together. In as much as Genesis 2:7 describes the making of a human at Creation, Ecclesiastes 12:7 describes the un-making of a human at death. Death is the reversal of the creation act: the dust returns to the earth where it came from, and the breath of life returns to God who gave it.

“And the spirit will return to God who gave it” (Eccles. 12:7, NKJV). How does it make you feel about God to know that He gave you the breath of life?

SOUL (Ps. 23:3; Matt. 26:38; Heb. 4:12).

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *nephesh* occurs 755 times and is translated in various ways depending on the context. It is most frequently translated “life” (Gen. 9:4, 5; 1 Sam. 19:5; Job 2:4, 6; Ps. 31:13) and “person” (Gen. 14:21; Num. 5:6; Deut. 14:22). It is also translated “dead body” (Num. 9:6) and “appetite” (Eccles. 6:7). In numerous places it is translated as personal pronouns (Gen. 12:13; Lev. 11:43, 44; Ps. 3:2; Jer. 37:9). In the New Testament, the Greek word *psuche* is similar to the Hebrew word *nephesh* and is translated “life” or “lives” over forty times.

In the following verses, the King James Version translates *nephesh* and *psuche* as “soul.” How does your Bible translate them?

Gen. 2:7; 12:5 _____

Ezek. 18:4 _____

Matt. 26:38 _____

Rev. 16:3 _____

“A living soul” (Gen. 2:7). “When the lifeless form of man was infused with this divine ‘breath,’ *neshamah*, of life, man became a living ‘soul,’ *nephesh*. The word *nephesh* has a variety of meanings [see above]. . . . [None of these meanings] applies to the spirit, *ruach*, indicating clearly the great difference between the two terms. It is obvious from [these meanings] that the translation “soul” given by the KJV to the *nephesh* of ch. 2:7 is not appropriate, if the commonly used expression “immortal soul” be implied. Although popular, this concept is completely foreign to the Bible. This passage may rightly be translated: ‘Man became a living being’ (RSV). When ‘soul’ is considered synonymous with ‘being,’ we gain the Scriptural meaning of *nephesh* in this text.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 223.

The fact that the words *nephesh* and *psuche* are translated “soul,” plus so many other different ways, shows they cannot refer to a specific conscious entity capable of surviving after death. The idea that the “soul” can exist apart from the body is wholly foreign to the Bible. Such a concept originated in the ancient pagan religious and philosophical systems of Egypt and Greece then made its way into Christian theology. In Scripture, the word *soul* generally means the whole person as when Adam started living or when Jesus said that His “soul,” or His whole person, was sorrowful.

Probably most of the people you know who are not members of your church believe Christians go to heaven when they die. Based on today’s lesson, how would you explain to them otherwise?

BODY (Jer. 17:5; 1 Cor. 15:50-52; Gal. 5:16-26).

In the Old Testament, the word *flesh* is translated from the Hebrew *basar* and in the New Testament from the Greek *sark*. *Basar* and *sark* describe: (1) the body or physical parts of humans and animals (Gen. 9:4; 29:14; Luke 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:39); (2) living things in general (Gen. 6:13; 1 Pet. 1:24); (3) material things contrasted with spiritual things (Jer. 17:5; Zech. 2:13; Matt. 16:17; Mark 14:38; Luke 24:39); (4) the carnal nature of humankind, which is contrary to spiritual things or the Holy Spirit (Rom. 7:18; 8:3; Gal. 5:16-21); (5) an obedient spirit, “a heart of flesh” (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26); men and women’s mortal nature (1 Cor. 15:50-52). (See *SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 354.)

Both the Old and New Testaments view humans holistically, not as independent parts labeled spirit, soul, and body. As the three Persons of the Godhead function as One, so our spirit, soul, and body function as one. The thinking part of humans—the mind—is usually translated from the Hebrew *leb* and from the Greek *nous*, but also from numerous other words such as *ruach* and *pneuma*. So Paul’s prayer that the God of peace would sanctify our spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. 5:23) is a prayer for God to sanctify the entire person.

Match the expressions to the following texts:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Jer. 17:5 | <input type="checkbox"/> A. Flesh is mortal and corruptible |
| 2. Ezek. 11:19 | <input type="checkbox"/> B. Carnal nature is against the Spirit |
| 3. Ezek. 36:26 | <input type="checkbox"/> C. Flesh is not a source of strength |
| 4. 1 Cor. 15:50-52 | <input type="checkbox"/> D. Heart of flesh means willing obedience |
| 5. Gal. 5:17 | <input type="checkbox"/> E. God will give us united hearts |

All human beings are born in sin. And their entire nature has been adversely affected by the virus of sin (Ps. 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9-18).

Explain the conflict between flesh and Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26) and the solution to the problem (Rom. 7:22-8:1-4).

IMMORTALITY (Rom. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:53, 54; 1 Tim. 6:16; 2 Tim. 1:10).

The word *immortality* comes from one Greek word meaning “deathlessness” and from another Greek word meaning “incorruptibility.” The Bible describes God only as being immortal (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16), while it describes the Christians as seeking for immortality (Rom 2:7), which they receive at His second coming (1 Cor. 15:53, 54).

How do the following verses describe God and humans in terms of mortality and immortality?

Job 4:17 _____

Rom. 2:5-7 _____

Rom. 6:12 _____

Rom. 8:11 _____

1 Cor. 15:53, 54 _____

2 Cor. 4:11 _____

1 Tim. 6:13-16 _____

2 Tim. 1:10 _____

When Scripture speaks of God having immortality, it means that in Him there is no decay and death and that He is the only and eternal Source of life. If only God has immortality, we may gain it only as His gracious gift to us. We are potentially immortal on account of Creation and redemption. But we become immortal only through God's grace in accepting the gift of His Son. Immortality is conditional because there is no eternal life except through Jesus Christ and the eternal life He offers us. It is something we receive potentially when we accept Christ as our personal Saviour and are “remade” by the Holy Spirit. Immortality becomes our actual possession only at the second coming of Christ. In this sense, immortality for the Christian is both a present reality and a future gain.

“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:11, 12, NKJV). What is your personal testimony regarding eternal life?

SPIRITUALITY (Rom. 7:14; 8:6; 1 Cor. 2:13, 14; 10:1-3; Col. 3:16).

The Greek word for spiritual or spirituality is used in a variety of ways: (1) to designate that which exists, including “spirit” such as devils and angels (Eph. 6:12); (2) typologically to give spiritual meaning to symbols (1 Cor. 10:1-4); (3) most commonly for that which is attuned to God’s redemptive plan through Christ and to the presence of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:1-9). (See *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Edgar W. Smith Jr., ed. [Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988], vol. 4, p. 601.)

Describe what being spiritual means in the following texts:

Rom. 7:14 _____

Rom. 8:6 _____

1 Cor. 2:13, 14 _____

1 Cor. 10:1-3 _____

Col. 3:16 _____

What does it mean to be “spiritual” or to “grow spiritually”? It means to become more and more like Jesus. We cleave to Him by recognizing our helplessness then focusing on His character (Gal. 5:22, 23). By doing so, we become changed into His image. It also means to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and our neighbor as ourselves (Luke 10:15-28). Spirituality then is the fruit of our lives, as we have committed them to God, who loves us with an everlasting love.

“When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break that tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. . . . But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we ‘are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.’ 2 Corinthians 3:18.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 72.

Let the following be your daily prayer: “‘Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine, I lay all my plans at Thy feet.’ ”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 70.

FURTHER STUDY: Review this week's Memory Text, 1 Thessalonians 5:23. What significance do you see in Paul's sequence of first the spirit, then the soul, then the body?

For more on what it means to be spiritual, read *Steps to Christ*, "Growing Up Into Christ," pp. 67-75.

Many Christians believe that the soul is an entity capable of existing without a body. Others are beginning to believe in the transmigration of the soul.

One denomination teaches that we all existed in heaven as souls in the presence of the Father and Son. We came to earth as humans to experience sin and mortality, but again as souls we will go back to heaven. The earthly experience is necessary for our future in heaven, where we can advance to a higher level of being gods.

Eastern religions, which are becoming more and more acceptable in industrialized countries, often color their belief in the transmigration of souls with hopes for self-development. According to the Law of Karma, men and women are compelled to come back and relive their lives according to cosmic justice, which dictates either a higher or lower existence, depending on the life they lived. After repeatedly working out their problems in previous lives, they finally become self-redeemed.

For further information regarding the above subjects, see Douglas R. Groothuis, *Unmasking the New Age* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1968), pp. 150, 151 and Ed Decker and Dave Hunt, *The God Makers* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1984), pp. 22-48.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. After studying this week's lesson, how would you answer this week's Key Questions in Sabbath's lesson? Use the outline you developed to help you.
2. A living person is not made of independent parts temporarily connected but consists of one indivisible whole. How would you contrast the truth of this to the deception of dualism?

SUMMARY: Humans were created by God to have a soul, body, and spirit. No entity is capable of living on its own. All three work together, and not one of them is excluded from the process of spiritual growth.



The Outcast

Charlotte Ishkanian

Kohila (KO-he-la) was just 8 years old when her mother became ill with cancer. A pastor from a local Christian congregation met the family and learned of Mother's illness. He offered to pray for Mother. The family, grasping at any straw of hope, began attending the Christian church. But when Mother died, Kohila's father reverted to Hinduism and resumed smoking and other bad habits that he had once enjoyed.

A young Adventist pastor came to town and met Kohila's father. He invited him to study the Bible and attend evangelistic meetings nearby. Father agreed, and after five months, he accepted Jesus Christ into his life and prepared for baptism.

The pastor suggested that Kohila and her sister Jothi should not remain at home without a mother. He helped Father enroll them in Thomas Higher Secondary School, a boarding school in southern India.

The community members were upset that Kohila's father had become an Adventist. They beat him up and excommunicated him from the village. He was not allowed to take water from the public well, buy from the village shops, or work on the farms belonging to villagers. Father faced starvation.

A Muslim man gave him rice and hired him to work on his land so he could provide food for his family. Kohila's two older sisters and their husbands also helped their father with food and a little money. For six years the villagers ostracized him.

When another Adventist pastor came to the village, the villagers beat him. They complained to the police that the Adventists were disturbing the people. But after the police investigated, they told the villagers, "You have your Hindu temple; let these people have their religious faith. Leave them alone." The persecution finally relaxed, and now Kohila's father can work and buy in the village.

Kohila's faith has grown as she has seen how God preserved her family during difficult times. She plans to be baptized at the end of this year.



Kohila (KO-he-la) Ramayah is 17 years old and will soon complete her secondary school studies. She would like to study at Spicer Memorial College.

The Origin of Sin



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-19; Rev. 12:7-9.

MEMORY TEXT: "And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Revelation 12:11, NKJV).

KEY QUESTIONS: What are the two main mysteries in the Bible? How does each mystery affect the nature of humankind? And what are the results of each mystery?

BIBLICAL PICTURES OF LUCIFER. From Scripture, we have only glimpses into the existence of Satan as Lucifer, the mighty angel, the covering cherub, standing in the presence of God. But we have ample information about the devastating effects of sin on the human race, not to mention on the universe, and the pain it has brought to the heart of God.

We need always to remember that while the words of Scripture are those of the writers, it was the Holy Spirit who planned and unified the Scriptures in all essential points, including the history of Lucifer. Also, it was the Holy Spirit who determined when, how, and by whom the revelation should be given.

The prophecy about the king of Tyre also represents the history of the real king of Tyre, who was Satan himself. The prince of Tyre had so remarkably imitated the example of his leader, the devil, that he was controlled by the same principles as Satan. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 675.)

THE KING OF BABYLON (Isa. 14:12-15; Dan. 4:18-37).

Explain why the passage concerning the fall of Lucifer in Isaiah 14:12-15 appears in the middle of a chapter dealing with the fall of the king of Babylon.

It is quite appropriate to apply the language addressed to the king of Babylon to Satan, "for the pride of the king of Babylon was truly satanic. When Satan works his malign will through rulers of this world, he reproduces his own wicked qualities in them so that they become virtual shadows of which he is the substance." This passage clearly points to Satan in the same way the kings of the line of David point to Christ.—*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 105.

Compare Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the tree (Dan. 4:1-37) to Lucifer's pride mentioned in Isaiah 14:12-15.

Both the king of Babylon and Satan, the king of spiritual Babylon, were filled with the same pride and turned against God. The king of Babylon was warned about his pride in a dream. He was told he would be cut down unless he "broke off his sins by being righteous and by showing mercy to the poor" (Dan. 4:27). But one year later Nebuchadnezzar said with pride, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" (v. 30). Then, however, after losing his throne for seven years, he became king again and praised God and "honored Him who lives forever" (v. 34). Unfortunately, Lucifer did not repent.

Contrast the unyielding pride of Satan (Isa. 14:13, 14) with the humility of Christ (Matt. 20:28; Phil. 2:5-11).

"Had Lucifer really desired to be like the Most High, he would never have deserted his appointed place in heaven; for the spirit of the Most High is manifested in unselfish ministry. Lucifer desired God's power, but not His character."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 435.

What do you desire most? Why is it wrong to desire God's power as Lucifer did?

What relationship should there be between wanting God's power and His character? How is God's character a part of His power?

WAR IN HEAVEN (Rev. 12:7-9).

Describe the outcome of the war in heaven between Michael and the dragon. Rev. 12:7-9. Show from the following texts that Michael is another name for the Son of God. Dan. 10:13; 12:1; John 5:25; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Jude 9.

The word *archangel* comes from the Greek word meaning “chief angel,” “first angel,” or “high angel.” It can be translated “chief of the angels” since according to the above texts, Michael is another name for Christ.

What does the following text imply about the kind of behavior that led to Satan’s expulsion from heaven? John 8:44.

“Lucifer’s covert actions blinded many angels to God’s love. The resulting discontent and disloyalty to God’s government grew until one-third of the angelic host joined him in rebellion (Rev. 12:4). The tranquility of God’s kingdom was shattered and ‘war broke out in heaven’ (Rev. 12:7). The celestial warfare issued in Satan, depicted as the great dragon, the ancient serpent, and the devil, being ‘cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him’ (Rev. 12:9).”—*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. 100.

Underline the false reasoning of Satan in the following quotation:

“He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, angels, being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide. They were not beings that could bring dishonor to God; all their thoughts were holy; it was no more possible for them than for God himself to err.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 37.

What examples of false reasoning can you think of? Would the belief “once saved always saved” be based on false reasoning? Explain.

Can you think of times when you used false reasoning to argue your position, either for God or away from Him? What were the results of your reasoning?

THE SEEDS OF SIN (Matt. 13:36-43).

Lucifer used the same subtlety in the Garden of Eden to lead humans into sin that he used in heaven with the angels. Those seeds sown in the hearts of Adam and Eve soon sprouted and produced a harvest of false worship, hatred, and murder (Gen. 4:1-8). As the years passed, sin intensified as did its tragic consequences.

Identify the sin or sins that brought on the following tragedies:

Genesis 4:1-8 _____

Genesis 6:1-8 _____

Genesis 11:1-8 _____

Genesis 19:1-29 _____

How does Hosea's prophecy against Israel in Hosea 8:7 explain the increasing nature of sin? Compare this passage with Psalm 126:6, 2 Corinthians 9:6, and Galatians 6:7.

Hosea is warning Israel of coming destruction because of their continued rebelliousness. Using agricultural metaphors, Hosea tells them that they will reap not only disappointment and utter want but distress and trouble and finally be swallowed up by Assyria and scattered among the surrounding nations.

There is a cumulative quality in evil. The seeds of sin we sow are alive and produce a harvest (Matt. 13:36-43). Unfortunately, we have a strong tendency to ignore the fact that we live in a moral universe in which justice, while blended with mercy, must be carried out to maintain the kind of society that such a universe demands. When the privileged abuse their privilege, when the wealthy squander their wealth while ignoring those in need, when the powerful misuse their power, trouble lies ahead. Continued and prolonged abuse sets the stage for tragedy.
—*The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1956), vol. 11, pp. 649, 650.

We witness the tragic results of sin in the death of Jesus, who gave His life to contain and eventually eradicate sin. Soon there will be a new heaven and a new earth where dwells righteousness. Spend some thoughtful minutes just now considering the Cross and the new heaven and new earth which you will be able to enjoy as a result.

DEFINING SIN (Rom. 3:20; 7:7-12; 14:23; 1 John 3:4).

The Old Testament defines sin in broad strokes. The New Testament defines it more precisely. The prophets of Israel speak of sin as a rupture of a personal relationship with God, a betrayal of His trust, the breaking of the covenant He made with us. We become most aware of sin and our own sinfulness in the presence of the holy God (Isa. 6:5; Ps. 51:1-9). For Paul, sin is not only a conscious transgression, it is a malignant condition of the human heart. (See *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 1012.)

What is your understanding of Romans 3:20 in the light of Paul's experience in 7:7-12?

Romans 7:8. "Paul personifies sin as a principle and power antagonistic to the law of God. . . . Sin is represented in the New Testament as an enemy that is ever seeking to bring about our ruin and takes every occasion to accomplish it. It is described as surrounding and besetting us (Heb. 12:1), bringing us into bondage (Rom. 6:12), enticing us, and thus working our death (James 1:14, 15)." —*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 549.

Paul states unequivocally that without God's law, seen in nature (Rom. 1:18-21) or written (Rom. 2:12-16), there would be no sin (Rom. 5:12, 13). John echoes Paul when he says, "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4, NIV).

Reconcile Paul's definition of sin in Romans 3:20 with his definition in 14:23.

Describe the relationship between faith and law.

The essence of sin is the absence of faith, or not trusting what God says. But the law gives an advantage to faith, for it provides us with a knowledge of sin we do not see in nature alone (Rom. 3:1-4). Faith and works are related in that we show our faith in what God says by what we do (James 2:17-20). Disobedience is unbelief. But true faith always leads to an obedience that serves as a witness to our trust in God.

A friend believes your Sabbath keeping is quite legalistic. Based on John 14:15 and 15:14, how would you explain to this person that obedience to God's commands is not legalism?

THE ERADICATION OF SIN (Gen. 3:15; John 3:14, 15; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:23-28).

Define the word *seed* as used in Genesis 3:15. Then compare its use in that verse with its use in Galatians 3:16.

The serpent is only able to “bruise” the heel of the seed. But the “seed” of the woman is able to “crush” the serpent’s head. Bruising is temporary, while the crushing is permanent. In this one verse is compressed the entire record of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, which began in heaven and will terminate on earth (Rev. 20:10). The critical battle was fought while Christ was on earth and culminated in the defeat of Satan at Calvary (Heb. 2:14). Christ did not emerge from this battle unscathed. The nail marks in His hands and feet will be with Him forever (Zech. 13:6). But from Calvary on, the demise of Satan was certain (Rev. 12:12). (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 233.)

When speaking to Nicodemus in John 3:14 and 15, to what did Jesus compare His mission? What did He expect Nicodemus to understand from this? Num. 21:4-9; John 12:32. Relate your conclusion to 2 Corinthians 5:21.

In the first half of 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul speaks of three aspects of the atonement: (1) Christ was treated as if He were a sinner when He bore on the cross the penalty and the guilt of sin; (2) Christ assumed human nature without its sin; (3) Christ became a sacrifice for sin. The first aspect speaks of substitution, the second of identification, the third of sacrifice. So completely did the sinless Christ—impeccably pure inwardly and outwardly—identify with the sinner and assume his sins that Paul could profoundly say, “God made Him to be sin for us.”

In the second half of this verse, the sinner receives a right standing before God on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ and actually shares the righteousness that characterized God Himself. (See *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, pp. 354, 355.)

Describe how complete Christ's sacrifice is and how it relates to His second coming. Hebrews 9:23-28 will help you.

How would you explain to a friend the manner in which Jesus is able to counteract Satan's system and accusations?

FURTHER STUDY: Pride was the downfall of Satan and, therefore, the soil in which sin was cultivated. Read more about pride in the following verses: Prov. 6:16, 17; 8:13; 15:25; 16:5; 26:12; 29:23; Mal. 4:1; Luke 18: 9-14; 2 Tim. 3:1-4; James 4:6; 1 John 2:16.

Read *The Great Controversy*, “The Origin of Evil, pp. 492-504 and “Enmity between Man and Satan,” pp. 505-510.

Karl Menninger, in his book *Whatever Became of Sin?* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1973), challenges us not to paint over sin by calling it what it is not. He expresses his concern over the reluctance of the helping professions to call sin by its rightful name because it brings God into the picture and holds people accountable for certain behaviors, which by nature, they are reluctant to assume. Consequently, our understanding of sin has eroded and continues to do so. Crime has been called a sickness, alcoholism a disease, and assaults on others antisocial behavior. Such categorizing absolves people from acknowledging that they also are sinning against God.

It is still true that “the greatest want of the world is the want of men,—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.” —*Education*, p. 57.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think God knew beforehand what Satan would do? If so, why did He allow him to do what he did?
2. Why do you think God allowed sin to continue as long as it has, causing such tremendous suffering to the human race? Do you think Jesus could have come earlier in the stream of time to redeem us? Why didn't He?

SUMMARY: Scripture tells us that the mystery of sin began in the presence of God through a being called Lucifer. This resulted in a war in which God dismissed Lucifer from heaven. Through Lucifer, sin was transferred to this planet and became part of human nature. The consequences of sin are seen not only in the tragedies which followed but especially in the death of Christ, who characterizes the mystery of Godliness. While waiting for Him to return, we demonstrate our faith in God through obedience.



Dining-Car Evangelism

J. H. Zachary

Larissa Holapova (Ho-LAH-poh-vah) grew up in Tashkent, one of the Muslim Republics of the former Soviet Union. While attending the Adventist Seminary in Zaoksky, Russia, she participated in an evangelistic series. As she watched people's interest in the gospel grow into conviction, and conviction lead to baptism, she dedicated her life to the service of God.

During vacation she planned to visit her mother in Tashkent, a three-day trip by train. As she prepared for the trip she wondered, *Could I preach the gospel on the train?* It would be a challenge, because most of the passengers would be Muslims. She prayed about her idea and shared it with her friends. Some of them questioned her plan, but the idea persisted.

She filled her suitcases with Bibles and literature. After boarding the train, she found the head conductor and asked if she could rent the dining car between meals. But when he learned that she planned to teach the people about the similarities between the Bible and the Koran, the conductor refused to let her use the car.

Larisa tried another tactic. She walked through the dining car carrying her Bible. Some passengers noticed and asked her, "What is this book that you are carrying?" She told them it was a Bible. A man in a railroad uniform said, "Please, tell us about the Bible."

Larissa answered sorrowfully, "But the head conductor will not let me rent the dining car to teach about the Bible and the Koran."

"I am the director of this dining hall," the uniformed man answered. "I say you may use the car between meals to speak."

With a prayer in her heart Larissa began to speak. The car soon filled with people. They were surprised to learn that the Bible and the Koran contained many similarities. Between Larissa's speaking appointments the people came to her compartment to talk to her about God. Their interest in God's Word thrilled her. She is determined to return to her homeland in Tashkent to share the truths she loves with the people there.



Larissa Holapova (left) continues her studies at the Adventist seminary in Zaoksky, Russian Federation. J. H. Zachary is international evangelism coordinator for The Quiet Hour in Redlands, California.

The Fall



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Gen. 1:26, 27; 3:1-8; Isa. 1:1-6; John 1:11-13.

MEMORY TEXT: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12, NKJV).

KEY QUESTIONS: How did the entrance of sin affect human nature? Can the original state of human beings be regained? If so, how?

GOD'S PLAN. As we have studied previously this quarter, God created women and men in His own image, intending that they reflect His attributes, mirror His love and kindness, and govern this planet with the same care He would. But after Lucifer was cast out of heaven, he determined to ruin God's lovely creation.

In the book *Education*, page 17, we read that "every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do." How have Satan's efforts undermined your individuality, your power to think and to do? As you study this week's lesson, ask yourself this question as it relates to you personally. But don't just leave it there. Also ask yourself how you can resist Satan's efforts to make sure you are not reflecting your Creator. It is a battle for the human heart and destiny. Satan's plan is to plunge people further into their fallen state, leading them to their eternal destruction. God's plan is to help them regain what they had lost and ultimately be restored to His image.

SATAN'S ANGER (Gen. 3:1-7; 1 Pet. 5:7, 8; Rev. 12:10-12).

Why was Satan so angry with the human race? 1 Pet. 5:7, 8; Rev. 12:10-12.

Satan tempted Adam and Eve to sin that he might secure their cooperation and continue the warfare against Christ that he had begun in heaven.

"The trial of our first parents was permitted as a test of their loyalty and love. This test was essential to their spiritual development, to the formation of character. Eternal happiness would have been the result for them if they had come out of the test unscathed."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 229.

Read Genesis 3:15. Explain what it means to "put enmity" in men and women. What is the source of that enmity?

It is the grace of Christ that implants enmity in the soul against Satan. Without this grace and renewing power, we would be willing captives of Satan, ever ready to do his bidding. But God's grace makes us hate sin and any form of inhumanity, thus creating conflict between good and evil.

"God's message brought encouragement because it announced that though Satan had brought humanity under his evil spell, ultimately he would be defeated. The covenant was made between God and humanity. First God promised through His grace a bulwark against sin. He would create a hatred between the serpent and the woman; between Satan's followers and God's people. This would disrupt man's relationship with Satan and open the way for a renewed relationship with God . . . All who accept God's offer of grace will know an enmity against sin that will make them successful in the battle with Satan. Through faith they will share in the Saviour's victory at Calvary."—*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. 93.

Read Romans 16:20. At first it seems strange that such a thing as enmity could be a reason for hope, a vehicle through which God's grace can work. But such is the nature of God's promise to us in Genesis 3:15. How has the enmity between Satan and God's followers "opened the way for a renewed relationship" between God and yourself?

How has this enmity helped you learn more about God's grace?

THE IMAGE OF ADAM (Gen. 5:1-5; 6:1-5; Rom. 3:9-26).

Explain the difference between Adam and Eve being created in the “image of God” and Seth being born “in their own image.” Gen. 5:1-5.

While Adam was created in the “likeness” or “image” of God, Adam and Eve had children “after their own likeness.” Seth did not inherit the natural goodness with which his parents were created. Instead, he inherited their sinful human nature. But because of the grace of the promised Redeemer, Seth was different from his older brother Cain. Soon there was a marked distinction between those who were subject to God and those who were not.

Scripture teaches that children inevitably suffer the consequences of the sins of their parents. But they are not held guilty or punished for the parents’ sins, except as they participate in them. It is usually the case that children walk in the footsteps of their parents and in this sense, by inheritance and example, they partake of their parents’ sins. Perverted appetites, corrupted morals, wrong tendencies, as well as disease and degeneracy are passed on from parents to their children. However, in this moral darkness shines the light of Jesus Christ, who makes His grace available to everyone who comes into the world (John 1:9).

How would you apply the second commandment to the degeneration of the human race? Exod. 20:4-6 (also see Ezek. 18:1-18; 2 Tim. 3:13; Rom. 5:17-21).

“God appeals to us to put Him before all else, to put Him first in our affections and in our lives in harmony with our Lord’s injunction in the sermon on the mount (Matt. 6:33). Mere belief alone will not do, nor even the acknowledgment that He is the one and only God. We owe wholehearted allegiance and devotion to Him as a personal Being whom it is our privilege to know, to love, and trust, and with whom we may have blessed fellowship. Dependence upon something else than God, whether it be wealth, knowledge, position, or friends, places us in peril.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 602.

Consider your wealth, knowledge, position, or friends. How might you be dependent upon them?

If you feel you are more dependent on the people you know than you are on God, what can you do to remedy the situation?

THE SIN WITHIN (Rom. 7:7-15).

Describe what Paul said about himself prior to his conversion. Acts 26:1-4; Phil. 3:1-6.

Paul came from the tribe of Benjamin, which gave Israel its first king. Being a Jew by birth, he went through the covenant rite of circumcision at the proper age, was educated under the great teacher Gamaliel, outstripped his contemporaries in the knowledge and practice of the law, and eventually became a member of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish court. At that point in his life, Paul believed that righteousness equaled obedience to the law, "not only the written law with its 613 precepts but the oral tradition, transmitted by generations of rabbis." According to Paul's post-conversion assessment of himself, as a Pharisee he thought of himself as blameless, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. (See *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Edgar W. Smith, Jr., ed. [Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986], vol. 3, p. 710.)

Explain why God's law convicted Paul that he was a sinner. Rom. 7:7-12.

The law produces a consciousness of sin, particularly the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet. . . ." Did Paul select one of the commandments at random just as an illustration of how sin convicted him? No. To "covet" means to "desire." And through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, Paul discovered that he was doing the right thing—eagerly obeying God—for the wrong reason. While his outward actions appeared to be flawless, his motives were distorted. The tenth commandment unifies the law by evaluating our desires in relation to each of the other nine. Jesus made this point quite clear when He said that hatred is only a preliminary step to murder, desire is the precursor to adultery, and that the absence of positive action toward one's neighbor breaks the intent of the law (Matt. 5:21-48). There is only a short step between desire and action. The only missing ingredient is opportunity with immunity. In this sense, Jesus calls us to a most radical kind of obedience, an obedience that reaches into our very hearts.

Think it through: Is it possible you might be keeping the commandment to accumulate merit without realizing it? If so, what can you do about it?

CONFLICT (Matt. 16:24-26; Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:13-24).

Explain what Jesus meant in Matthew 16:24-26 when He said we should take up our cross and follow Him.

To put God first in our lives is not always easy. Again and again, we will have to decide to do so, especially when we are faced with temptations. There is no genuine faith without sacrifice of some kind. If God could have resolved the sin problem any other way besides Calvary, He would have done so. Yes, discipleship is costly. We will always struggle between comfort and sacrifice, between needs and wants, between what is legitimate for us to do and what is not legitimate for us to do. Such was Paul's experience.

Explain the experience of Paul as he enlarges upon it in Romans 7:13-24.

Do these verses refer to his preconversion experience, postconversion experience, or both? Explain your answer.

There is no doubt Paul was a man of conflict, possessing the same sinful human nature we all possess. He was very much aware of the sacrifice and discipline it took to conform to the legalistic standards of the Pharisees and later to the spiritual standard of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before his conversion, his zeal for God, as he understood it, caused him to persecute the church. He thought he was doing what was right but later discovered he was not. After his conversion, and in spite of his zeal for Christ, he found that he still had not attained (Phil. 3:12-14).

Paul was aware of the fact that while his inner conflict was resolved "in Christ," he was still "in the flesh." Though Christ has fought and won the decisive battle between good and evil, the war will continue until He returns triumphantly and "delivers the kingdom to the Father."

Never think that because we stumble along our Christian walk, our best is not good enough. God loves us. He gave His Son to die for us. We will never live long enough to be good enough to be saved. We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ, who alone was "good enough" and whose perfect obedience is credited to us free of charge. We respond in grateful obedience, not to be saved but because we are saved, because Christ died to save us. *That* is the good news of the gospel.

Despite the stumblings and falls in our Christian walk, what rich promise does Christ offer in Jude 24, 25 to those who lean on Him?

RESOLUTION (Rom. 7:25–8:5; John 14:15–18).

Describe how Paul resolved the conflict of sin within himself.
Rom. 7:25–8:5.

Paul's cry of despair hardly prepares us for the triumphant pronouncement that follows. While he is aware of the fact that his sinful human nature will always be with him, he has made up his mind to be a joyful slave of Christ. He recognizes that even though the law of sin still operates in fallen human nature, it is superseded by the law of the Holy Spirit, whose presence frees us from the inner compulsion to serve self. He resolves the conflict within himself by focusing on Christ and the truth that there is no condemnation to those who walk not according to the dictates of the "flesh" but according to the guidance of the Spirit.

Discuss how we need to balance what Paul says about "walking in the Spirit" with what he says about it in Galatians 5:16–26 and with what Jesus says about the function of the Holy Spirit.

Explain what Jesus had in mind when He referred to the Holy Spirit as a Helper. John 14:15–19; 16:7–13. How is the Holy Spirit to help us?

The Greek word *comforter* is variously translated as "helper," "one who stands beside us," and one "who is called beside us." In the latter sense, some have translated it "attorney." But the word reflects a more active role than just merely comforting us or standing beside us. He reproves us, which means "to exhort," "to convict," or "to convince." The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, convinces us of the need of right-doing, and He will also tell us of things to come.

Implied in this verse is the promise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12:1–31; Eph. 4:7–16). One of these gifts is the gift of prophecy through which we receive a glimpse of the future through many passages in Paul's letters and the book of Revelation. In these last days, He also has given us a view of the future through the gift of prophecy given to Ellen White. This view is found in many of her works, but especially in *The Great Controversy*.

Gem thought: "When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1890.

Further Study: Compare Galatians 5:16-26 with Ephesians 4:17-5:21. How does the Ephesians passage help us to resolve the conflict between the law of sin and the law of the Holy Spirit that wars within ourselves.

Read *The Story of Redemption*, "Temptation and Fall," pp. 32-41 and "The Plan of Salvation," pp. 42-51.

"After the transgression of Adam, God might have destroyed every opening bud and blooming flower, or He might have taken away their fragrance, so grateful to the senses. In the earth seared and marred by the curse, in the briers, the thistles, the thorns, the tares, we may read the law of condemnation; but in the delicate color and perfume of the flowers, we may learn that God still loves us, that His mercy is not wholly withdrawn from the earth."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1085.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. After studying this week's lesson, how would you answer the Key Questions in Sabbath's lesson?
2. Someone defined "cheap grace" as justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. What is your reaction?
3. How do you relate this statement from *Steps to Christ*, page 64, to the process of your spiritual growth? "The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you."

SUMMARY: Satan marred God's plan for the human race when Adam and Eve fell. They in turn passed on their sinful human nature to their descendants. God does not condemn us for having such a nature. Instead, He has made a way for us to escape it. That way is through Jesus Christ and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.



Thirsty For Truth

Zeng Qing Peng

I am a high school teacher in China. During my free time I enjoyed going to game parlors, where I could watch TV, play *mah jong* or poker, and listen to music. At first I enjoyed the music and relaxed with the rhythm. But gradually the music and atmosphere of these places began to depress me. It seemed that a voice told me, "Leave this place and never return!"

I studied electronics and opened a home appliance repair shop. But I still played poker with my friends. I did not realize it, but I was addicted to gambling. I struggled with jealousy and hatred too. And once, because of my gambling habit, I was even jailed. When I got out of jail, my old friends laughed at me. But they still wanted me to gamble with them.

I began to think seriously about life and realized how many people in modern China are seeking after money. More and more people have become self-centered and jealous. Principles of truth and right living have become blurred in people's minds as they have become slaves to money!

I knew what was right and wrong, and I decided to listen to my conscience and follow its leading. But my good intentions left me friendless and lonely. Then I remembered a gospel radio program I had heard on shortwave radio.

I found the program on the dial and began listening. Hope returned to my heart. Since October [1996] I have been listening to the Voice of Hope radio from Hong Kong.

Ever since I began listening to these Christian programs my spiritual life has taken shape and is growing. I am thrilled about the privilege of knowing the Lord. Now I have hope and meaning in my life. I would like to give thanks to Jesus first, but also to the radio speakers and all of you who have made those wonderful programs that proclaim the good news.

I believe in God; I am seeking truth; I am thirsty for truth. I want to be baptized and cleansed by the Holy Spirit so that I can grow strong in the Lord. With God's mighty power I believe I can be a strength to others in chasing away evil. I yearn to help people to walk in the path that leads to life eternal.

Zeng Qing Peng lives in China. He wrote his testimony in a letter to Adventist World Radio. AWR broadcasts some 119 hours of Chinese-language programs to East Asia every week.

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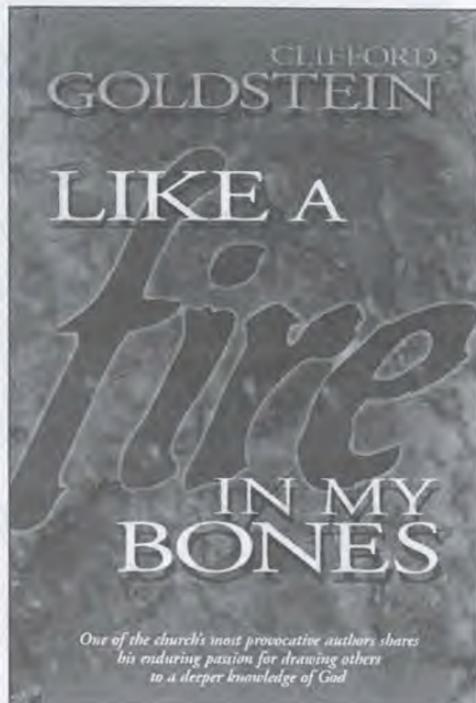


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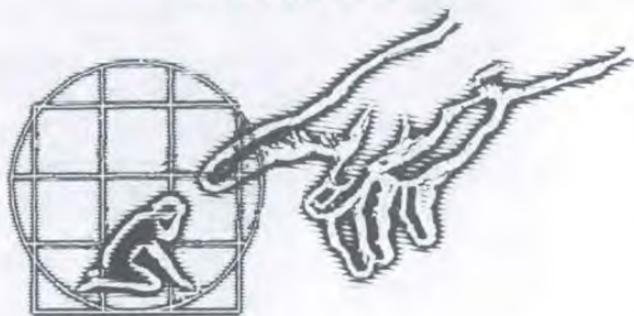
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The Restoration of Human Nature



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Pet. 1:13-21.

MEMORY VERSE: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9, NKJV).

KEY QUESTIONS: When was the plan of salvation made? When was it implemented?

HEART-WRENCHING DECISION. God knew before He created humans that they would sin. But if God drew back from the creation He had planned because of the pain He knew would be His, He would not be the God of love we witness in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. If love is unwilling to continue loving in the face of suffering, then that love is not the kind of love on which to build a relationship; but God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to save the fallen race.

"Before the Father He [Jesus] pleaded in the sinner's behalf, while the host of heaven awaited the result with an intensity of interest that words cannot express. Long continued was that mysterious communing,—'the council of peace' (Zech. 6:13) for the fallen sons of men. The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (Rev. 13:8); yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up his Son to die for the guilty race."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63.

There is no stronger evidence than Calvary that God cares. As you study this week's lesson, continually ask yourself how such love can make a difference in your life.

GOD'S GIFT (Rom. 6:16-23).

What happened to the human will the instant Adam and Eve sinned? Rom. 6:16. Compare this verse with Luke 4:16-19.

As soon as Adam and Eve sinned, their nature became evil. They became slaves of Satan ready to do his bidding, not because they were compelled to do so, but because they were willing to do so. However, "the instant man accepted the temptations of Satan, and did the very things God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead, saying, 'Let the punishment fall on Me.'"—Ellen G. White Comments, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1085.

When the image of God in Adam and Eve was shattered, they were unable to go back to God on their own, regardless of any desire for goodness that remained in them. If left alone they would have made an alliance with Satan against God. But at that same instant, God reached down and by His grace implanted in human nature a general revulsion against Satan and sin. This in turn would enable women and men to choose to accept the promise of salvation that would be consummated by Jesus Christ when He would die in their place.

The various aspects of God's grace are:

General Grace—This is the Creator's care that sustains all life and exercises control over human society.

Prevenient Grace—This is God's initiative on behalf of a sinful race that enables them to choose to believe.

Salvation Grace—This is the grace by which God saves, justifies, sanctifies, and restores.

Sufficient Grace—God's grace is adequate to save and is sufficient for all our needs into eternity. (See P.E. Hughes, "Grace," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 479-482.)

How does the story of the prodigal son show us each of these aspects of God's grace?

Make a list of moments when you personally experienced each of these aspects of grace. Refer to it in times of discouragement. Plan to share your list with someone when he or she comes to you discouraged.

Be able to explain to someone why people cannot say they are Christians simply because they have the power to choose to be saved.

PROMISE, REALITY, AND HOPE (Gen. 3:15; 22:1-18; Rom. 4:20-22; Gal. 3:16, 29; Heb. 6:17, 18; 2 Pet. 3:13).

All through the Old Testament, men and women of faith looked forward to and longed for the Messiah. All through the Old Testament, and still to Jewish people today, the Messiah was and is the Desire of all Ages. To the Christian, Jesus Christ is the Messiah; and some day people everywhere will see Him as the Desire of all Nations (Hag. 2:6, 7).

The entire plan of salvation is built on God's trustworthiness. The message throughout Scripture is that we can trust God. What He says He will do, and what He promises He will fulfill. The New Testament is the story of the fulfillment of the promise. What was promised has now happened. That is Paul's message. Reality has broken into the stream of history. Christ has come, died, and risen again. According to His promise, we can look for a new heaven and a new earth.

Old Testament

The Messiah will come.
Sins will be paid for.
Redemption is based on promise.

New Testament

The Messiah has come.
Sins have been paid for.
Redemption is based on reality.

Old Testament

Faith meant accepting
the promise of the future.
They looked forward to Christ's
first/second coming.

New Testament

Faith means accepting the
promise fulfilled.
The saints are looking
forward to Christ's
second coming.
Assurance comes from
God's truthfulness.

What understanding of the need of the human condition is common to the following texts? Heb. 6:19, 20; Titus 2:13; Rom. 5:1, 2; 8:18-25; 1 Cor. 13:13.

Within the human heart there is a divinely implanted restlessness. As Augustine said, "Our souls are restless until we find our rest in Thee." Not only human nature but all of creation groans for the restoration promised in Christ Jesus. This is what gives us security, confidence, perseverance, and hope. Without this quartet, we find ourselves in despair. But praise God! We have been redeemed.

**Out of what present despair can security, confidence,
perseverance, and hope in God's promise of salvation lift you?**

COSTLY BUT FREE (Isa. 55:1; Matt. 22:1-14; Rom. 3:23, 24; Eph. 2:8, 9; Rev. 22:17).

The parable in Matthew 22:1-14 is based on two parables the rabbis often told. Read all three parables. (The parables the rabbis told immediately follow this question.) Now compare the parable Jesus told with the two the rabbis told. What is the focus of Jesus' parable regarding the robe?

What is the focus of the rabbis' parables regarding the robe?

The rabbis' first parable tells of a king who invited guests to a feast without giving them the exact date. But he did tell them they must wash, anoint, and clothe themselves so they would be ready when his final summons came. Those who were wise immediately prepared and waited at the palace door. The foolish guests thought they had ample time before the king would issue the final summons and felt they could make the necessary preparations quickly. So they went about their business. The final summons came suddenly. Because they were not ready, the king did not allow them to enter.

The second rabbinical parable tells the story of how a king entrusted his servants with royal robes to be worn when he would summon them to come into his presence. The wise carefully stored these robes away to preserve their loveliness. Those who were foolish wore their royal robes to work. Thus they became soiled and stained. Suddenly the summons came to return the robes to the king. The wise handed their robes back to the king in their original beauty. The foolish gave them back dirty. The king was angry and cast the foolish into prison.
—William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, Penn.: The Westminster Press, 1955), pp. 296-298.

What understanding of human responsibility is common to the following texts? Isa. 55:1; Rom. 3:23, 24; Eph. 2:8, 9; Rev. 22:7.

The Greek word translated in Romans 3:24 as "justified" is an expression used in courts of law. To justify someone was to treat that person as innocent and acquit him or her. The point of this passage is that men and women appear before God guilty, but He justifies them as being innocent. (See Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, pp. 53, 54.)

When we claim Christ as our Saviour, God justifies us as being innocent even though we are guilty. Does this mean He excuses sin?

HUMAN NATURE REMADE (Jer. 13:23; John 1:12, 13; 3:1-8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:17-24; 1 Pet. 1:22, 23).

The new birth is not simply a new outlook on life, a recovery from a traumatic physical, mental, or social experience followed by a new beginning, or a change of habits, behavior, or career. The biblical expression *new birth* has to do with our inner being and may involve some, if not all, of the above. However, it concerns itself primarily with our spiritual nature.

The Greek word translated *again* has three different meanings:

1. a radical, complete change going back to the beginning;
2. born a second time; and
3. changed from above, from God.

At first glance, it seems that Nicodemus took the meaning of the word *again* in its second sense. He had an inexpressible, unsatisfied longing that he did not know how to satisfy in his heart. He knew he needed a change. But that was as impossible as a grown man being physically born again. He was up against an eternal problem: How can people who want to change be changed when they cannot change themselves? The answer Jesus gave was not new to the Jews or to the Greeks. Using various expressions to convey the same idea, Paul speaks of it throughout his epistles (Rom. 6:1-11; 1 Cor. 3:1, 2; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:22-24; and it is found in Heb. 5:12-14). In fact, the concept runs through the entire New Testament. (See Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, [Philadelphia, Penn.: The Westminster Press, 1956], vol. 1, pp. 113-116.)

Explain the meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:17 in light of John 3:1-8.

Through the creative energy of the Holy Spirit, people who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord become "new creatures." Their new nature is not the product of moral virtue inherent in a human that simply requires development. Neither is this new nature the product of desire or resolution to do right, the mental assent to certain doctrines, nor a sorrow for wrongdoing. The new birth means to be created anew in the likeness of Christ. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 868.)

Read the description of people before they are born again in Galatians 5:19-21. Then read the description of people after they are born again in verses 22-26. Now think of two or three words that describe what the world could be if everyone were born again.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (Mark 4:26-29; 1 Cor. 13:11; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pet. 2:1-3).

In light of Mark 4:26-29, how do you understand the process of spiritual growth and development?

The laws of nature apply to humans as well as to plants and animals. The same laws that govern our physical growth and well-being govern our spiritual development. The word *sanctification* means “to be set apart,” “to make holy.” In this sense, we become saints as soon as we accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord (Heb. 10:10; Luke 23:39-43).

The word *sanctification* also describes the process of becoming more and more like Jesus. Each and every day of our lives we depend on Him, lean on Him for help, especially in time of need (Heb. 4:15, 16).

Compare Philippians 1:6 with 2:12 in light of Galatians 4:1, 2. How do you reconcile these two passages?

God is not a permissive, noncaring parent. Because God loves us He disciplines us. He does not discipline us in order to make us persons He can love. He loved us while we were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8-10). God is not against us but for us (John 3:17). He will do all in His power to make us more and more like Himself. This was His goal when He created Adam and Eve. He began this same process in us when we accepted Christ not only as our Saviour but as Lord of our lives.

“God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 294.

Our human nature is such that God’s discipline can cause pain, confusion, and discouragement. When God disciplines you, what can you do to prevent discouragement?

Explain how daily habits of prayer, Bible study, etc. can be especially helpful to you in preventing feelings of melancholy and depression that often beset you in times of discouragement. What precious promises from the Holy Scriptures do you especially draw strength from during the dark periods of life?

FURTHER STUDY: What is involved in spiritual growth? Are there stages of faith as there are stages of physical development? What stages of faith did Paul have? Or is there one stage that deepens? (See Philippians 3:12-14.)

Read *The Sanctified Life*, "True and False Theories Contrasted," pp. 7-17.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. After studying this week's lesson, how would you answer the Key Questions in Sabbath's lesson?
2. Discuss the thoughts contained in this paragraph. Do you agree or disagree? Why, or why not? "In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus uses *teleios* to exhort believers to be perfect as the Heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5:48). This use of the future tense indicates a moral obligation, however, and not an absolute perfection identical to that of God. Jesus is emphasizing the need for having the right attitudes of love which are acceptable to God, not the accomplishment of perfect conduct."—"Perfection, Perfectionism," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 839.
3. Today we hear the expression "tough love" as contrasted with permissive love. Why is the latter not true love? In what ways does God show His "tough love"? What does such love reveal about Him?
4. What are some distinctions between absolute perfection and relative perfection? How do you understand this statement from Ellen White: "As God is perfect in His high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere"?—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 365.

SUMMARY: Even before Adam and Eve sinned, God had established a plan that would save them. This plan proves His great love for us. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, the plan of salvation helps us to grow spiritually. Such growth essentially involves developing a Christlike character.



A Happy Soul Winner

J. H. Zachary

Manju Bala is a happy Christian. For five years she attended an Adventist School. Her Hindu parents were pleased with the high level of moral training Manju was receiving. When Manju turned 11 she felt that she must make a decision. She carefully compared her Hindu faith with what she was learning from the Bible in her Christian school. She decided to follow Jesus.

She was baptized and began to share her new joy with her brother and sister, Safus and Beauty. How happy she was when they followed her in baptism. Manju prayed earnestly for her mother and rejoiced when her mother made her decision for Jesus.

In 1995 Manju, then 16 years old, learned about the Sathsumila Lay Training School in Bangladesh, where lay persons were trained to share their faith more effectively. She enrolled in classes to study health evangelism, small group ministries, and evangelism methods for reaching Muslims and Hindus. When she completed her studies, she was assigned to work in a village near the school.

Manju goes from home to home, talking with the farmers and day laborers who live in the village, looking for people who are interested in a better spiritual life. God is using her gentle ways and her winning smile to open doors.

Her first efforts were directed to helping people stop smoking. When she heard the excuse, "I have tried to stop, but I can't," Manju would say, "Please try one more time. I will pray to the living God in heaven to help you put away this dangerous habit." For several it worked.

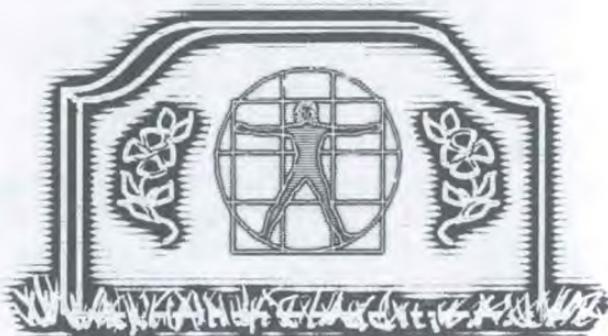
As friendships develop Manju begins Bible studies. She uses an old picture roll to illustrate Bible stories for her students as she leads them through their Bible lessons.

By camp meeting time, five of Manju's Bible students had been baptized, and three more were baptized during camp meeting. Twenty-five others attend her Bible classes and Sabbath services. When asked if she needs anything, Manju smiled. "Please pray for me. I would like to plant a church this year."



Manju Bala (left) lives and works for God in a village in Bangladesh. J. H. Zachary is international evangelism coordinator for The Quiet Hour, located in Redlands, California.

Condition in Death



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Eccles. 9:5, 6; John 11:11-14; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

MEMORY TEXT: "For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, NKJV).

KEY QUESTIONS: What exactly does the Bible teach about what happens to people when they die? Why is the correct belief regarding this subject so important?

PROBLEMS WITH POPULAR BELIEFS. Almost all Christians believe that immediately upon death the "soul" goes either to heaven, purgatory, or a place called hell. While thinking that loved ones are in heaven is very comforting, thinking that loved ones are in hell is not! Therefore, many people are tempted to think their loved one is in heaven anyway. After all, everyone has something good about him.

Another problem with thinking that the "soul" goes someplace specific after death is that those who are supposedly in heaven can see everything that is happening to the friends and family members they left behind. Are the people in heaven really happy watching their loved ones suffer without being able to do anything about it?

In the light of these problems, the biblical teaching that death is a sleep can be comforting, despite the fact that losing someone to death can be just as painful regardless of what one believes. There is always the joy of looking forward to the coming of Jesus and the resurrection. This belief is based on the promise of God in Scripture and filled with the hope that only Christ can give.

A CORE BELIEF (Matt. 24:4, 5, 24; 28:19, 20; Acts 20:27-30; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

In April 1848, James White and others met at Rocky Hill, Connecticut, in the United States to encourage each other in the faith, to hammer out further details of last-day prophecies, and to correct any errors in their religious beliefs. Over the next few months, they met several times. By September of that year, they had agreed upon eight points that would later become part of the Seventh-day Adventists' belief system. (These eight doctrines were in addition to the fundamental doctrines that make up the Christian faith such as the virgin birth, sinless life, atoning death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.)

The eight biblical doctrines they agreed on that would identify them as Seventh-day Adventist Christians were: (1) the imminent, personal, premillennial second advent; (2) the twofold ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, the cleansing of which began in 1844; (3) the seventh-day Sabbath; (4) the spirit of prophecy as given to Ellen White; (5) the three angels' messages; (6) conditional immortality and death as a dreamless sleep; (7) the timing of the seven last plagues; and (8) the final, complete extinction of the wicked after the millennium.—R.W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1979), pp. 68, 69.

Why should a doctrine such as the state of the dead be one of the pillars of the Adventist faith? Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 20:27-30; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

All scriptural teaching is important, especially on such subjects as Creation, sin, salvation, and restoration. Included in these is the nature of men and women, how God created them, for what purpose, what happened to change their nature, how He saves them, what happens when they die, and what are the prospects of their future. Together with their related topics (for example: salvation would include the incarnation, sinless life, death, and resurrection of Christ) are the core teachings of the Christian faith. As we near the end of time, the doctrine of the state of men and women in death becomes extremely important.

Through two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will succeed in bringing people under his deceptions. The belief in the immortality of the soul lays the foundation for spiritualism and Sunday sacredness and shifts the center of authority from Scripture to tradition (see *The Great Controversy*, p. 588).

How can you share with others the biblical teaching of the “state of the dead” in a kindly way, without offending their beliefs?

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE (Gen. 3:19; Job 14:21; Ps. 146:4; Eccles. 9:5, 6; Dan. 12:2; John 11:11-14; 1 Cor. 15:51-55).

Match the following phrases to the correct text:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Ps. 146:4 | _____ A. Those sleeping in the dust shall awake. |
| 2. Eccles. 9:5, 6 | _____ B. He is not dead, he's sleeping. |
| 3. Dan. 12:2 | _____ C. The day we die our thoughts perish. |
| 4. John 11:11-14 | _____ D. We shall not all sleep but be changed. |
| 5. 1 Cor. 15:51-55 | _____ E. The dead know nothing. |

Show how Jesus' experience confirms the biblical evidence that the dead rest in the grave until the resurrection. John 19:38-42; 20:11-23.

There is no doubt that Jesus died (John 19:31-42). During the Sabbath, He rested in Joseph's tomb. His work done, He now slept the peaceful sleep of death. He did not go to Paradise the day He died—that was simply the day a promise was given to the thief who accepted Him (Luke 23:43), for when He spoke to Mary on Sunday morning, He said that He had not yet ascended to His Father (John 20:17).

Explain how the resurrection of Lazarus confirms the biblical evidence that the dead sleep. John 11:1-44.

Martha did not believe her brother was in heaven, for she stated that she did not expect to see him until the resurrection in the last day. Jesus told her that He is the resurrection and the life. Then He raised Lazarus from the dead. Nowhere in Scripture is there a recorded conversation between Jesus and Lazarus, between Lazarus and his sisters about where he had been or what he had seen, nor with the disciples or anyone in the crowd who had seen him raised (John 11:17). This is a strong argument from silence that the dead go nowhere and know nothing.

REALITY OR PARABLE? (Luke 16:19-31).

People who believe in the immortality of the soul and life immediately after death offer Luke 16:19-21 as proof. Is this what the parable really teaches? Several principles of biblical interpretation are especially helpful here: (1) The place, circumstance, and persons to whom the parable is spoken are keys to its meaning. (2) Because a parable usually illustrates one particular truth, no doctrine should be based on the parable. (3) A parable reflects truth. It is not truth itself. Details of a parable are important only as they help us understand the truth reflected in it. (4) Knowledge of Jewish customs and ways of thinking gives us a clearer understanding of the parable's meaning. (5) The parable should be interpreted "in terms of the truth it is designed to teach, as set forth in literal language in the immediate context and elsewhere in Scripture."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 204.

With these principles in mind, let us now take a closer look at the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. First, many people in Jesus' audience had come to believe in the conscious state of existence between death and the resurrection. This belief was not grounded in the Old Testament but surfaced in Jewish writings after the Babylonian exile and, by the time of Jesus, had become part of Jewish traditional teaching. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 831.)

Second, this parable is the last in a series of five (Luke 15 and 16). Because Jesus told these stories in response to the Pharisees' complaint that He ate with sinners (15:2), each of them condemns the pride and hypocrisy so prevalent among these religious leaders by informing them that His kingdom "was more than form or ceremony; it was a fellowship with God and man."—*Questions on Doctrines*, p. 549.

In particular, the rich man felt assured of his place because he was a son of Abraham. Moreover, he probably believed that his wealth proved his "good" standing before God. Indeed, there is nothing in the parable to suggest he was a "bad" person. Why did he not even let Lazarus beg at his gate? How like the Pharisees he was. He and they both believed that who they were merited favor with God. The everlasting kingdom belonged to such as Lazarus. The rich man, though claiming to be a son of Abraham, was forever lost to God's kingdom.

Now list some of the points in the story that do not harmonize with the rest of Scripture concerning its teaching on the state of the dead. Note especially Luke 16:22, 23, 24, and 26.

How would you personally answer a friend who used Luke 16:19-31 to prove the immortality of the soul and immediate life after death?

OTHER PROBLEM TEXTS (1 Cor. 15:35-52; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Rev. 6:9-11).

Explain the difference between a “natural” body and a “spiritual” body. 1 Corinthians 15:35-52, John 20:24-29, Acts 1:9-11, and Philippians 3:21 might help you.

“Paul is simply affirming that man’s present body is unfit for entrance into the kingdom of God. That resurrected bodies will have flesh and blood may reasonably be deduced from the fact that our new bodies will be fashioned like unto the glorious resurrection body of Christ (Phil. 3:20, 21), which consisted of ‘flesh and bones’ (Luke 24:39 . . .). It is further reasonable to conclude that the bodies of the resurrected saints will not differ too greatly from the kind of body that Adam possessed when he was first created (Gen. 2:7). If man had not sinned, he doubtless would have retained that body forever.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 812.

Now read 2 Corinthians 5:8. What expressions in verses 4 and 5 clarify what Paul meant when he said he would rather be absent from the body and present with the Lord?

“In verses 3, 4 Paul describes death as a state of being ‘naked,’ or ‘unclothed.’ He hopes, if at all possible, to avoid this intermediate state, and ardently desires to be ‘clothed’ with his ‘house . . . from heaven.’ In other words, he hopes to be translated without seeing death. . . . Elsewhere (see on 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; etc.) Paul makes it certain that men are not ‘clothed’ with immortality individually at death, but simultaneously at the resurrection of the just.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 863.

Another problem verse is Revelation 6:9. Here we must remember that Revelation is a composite of literal and symbolic expressions such as the existence of real angels, a real Jesus, and a real new earth, on the one hand, and angels riding horses across the earth on the other. In light of such texts as Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, there can be no talking “souls” in heaven, much less “souls” crying for vengeance. This is obviously symbolic language used to convey a message to future martyrs that justice and vindication would ultimately come. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 777, 778.)

What does the correct interpretation of such difficult biblical texts teach us about biblical interpretation in general?

RESURRECTION AND TRANSLATION (1 Cor. 15:12-18; 51-55; 1 Thess. 4:15-17).

Rephrase the logic Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 15:12-18 to prove the certainty of the resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ is the basis of our faith. If Christ had not been innocent and free from sin, He would not have risen from the grave. But Christ did rise from the dead. Therefore our faith is not in vain but built on the certainty of a living Christ. As the angels said to the women at the tomb, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:5, 6). And because He lives, we shall live also (Rom. 8:11).

Explain how Paul's sequence of resurrection/translation in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 fits into the doctrine of the state of the dead.

The word *prevent* as used in some translations means "to come before" or "to precede." Paul is saying that the living saints will not meet their Lord before those who are asleep in Christ. But all those who believe in Christ will meet Him together. This verifies what we have studied elsewhere about the state of those who have died "in Christ." They are asleep, awaiting the coming of their Lord. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 248.)

Although Paul is speaking of the richness of the Christian life when he says "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him," it is also true that we cannot imagine what God has in mind for us once we are home.

"There we shall know even as also we are known. There the love and sympathies that God has planted in the soul will find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages, the sacred fellowship that binds together 'the whole family in heaven and earth,'—all are among the experiences of the hereafter.

"There will be music there, and song, such music and song as, save in the visions of God, no mortal ear has heard or mind conceived. . . .

"All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings."—*Education*, pp. 306, 307.

Describe what the resurrection will mean to you and how real you think the afterlife will be. 1 Cor. 2:9; 13:12; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:1, 2; Rev. 21:1-5.

FURTHER STUDY: For additional texts regarding the study of the human condition in death and the rewards Christ promises to the faithful at the resurrection, see any or all of the following texts: Job 7:21; 14:14, 15; 17:13, 16; 19:25-27; 20:11; 21:26; Ps. 6:5; 17:15; 22:29; 30:9; 88:10; 104:29; 115:17; Eccles. 3:20; 9:10; Isa. 38:18, 19; 40:10; Matt. 16:27; 22:28-30; Luke 20:37; John 5:29; 6:39, 40; Acts 2:29; 1 Cor. 15:17, 18; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8; Heb. 11:39, 40; 1 Pet. 3:21; Rev. 22:12.

Read *The Great Controversy*, "The First Great Deception," pp. 531-550.

In his two-volume set entitled *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, volume II, 1965, volume I, 1966, Le Roy Froom documents in over two thousand pages the belief of numerous Christian scholars and pastors throughout history who rejected the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. A condensed list appears in *Questions on Doctrines*, published by the Review and Herald in 1957, pages 567-609. Martin Luther, for example, said that in the sleep of death, as in normal physical sleep, there is complete unconsciousness of the condition of death or of the passage of time. Death is a deep, sound, sweet sleep. And the dead will remain asleep until the time of the Resurrection when once more body and soul will come together (pp. 571, 572).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. After studying this week's lesson, how would you answer the Key Questions in Sabbath's lesson?
2. Is it legitimate to aspire to immortality when Christ comes again? However, how is believing oneself immortal, like God is, the height of pride, presumption, and delusion?
3. Most Christians believe that when they die they go directly to heaven to receive their rewards. If that is so, why does Jesus say in Revelation 22:12 that He will reward the saints at His coming?

SUMMARY: The Bible teaches that death is a sleep until the Resurrection. This faith has always been a hedge against spiritualism and so-called appearances of dead loved ones and is so today. But the day of resurrection is coming when all who are asleep in Christ will live and those who are alive will be changed and forever they will be with the Lord.



Train Up A Child

Charlotte Ishkanian

Ruth Wetzel is a widow living in northern Germany. For years she cared for foster children. Most of the children came to her when they were quite young, but one day a social worker told Ruth about a teenage boy named Heinz who needed a home. He was having difficulties in school and in the foster home where he had been staying. The social worker asked Ruth to take him.

Ruth was not sure. A teenager could be difficult to work with, and she had other children in her home. Ruth told the social worker that she was an Adventist, and was away at church each Saturday from 8:00 to 2:00. German schools operated on Saturday mornings, and Ruth was sure the authorities would not want Heinz to miss classes.

The social worker asked Ruth to think about it. A few days later the social worker returned with permission for Ruth to take any child in her care out of school on Saturdays to attend church with her. Ruth knew God wanted her to take this boy.

Heinz lived with Ruth for two years. He attended church with her, but never really showed an interest in religion. When he was 15 he left her home to attend a technical school to study carpentry. Writing was difficult for him, and he seldom wrote to her, but he visited her once or twice a year. She was always glad to see him, and prayed for him every day. She knew he was a troubled, lonely boy.

One day Heinz came to visit Ruth and asked her where the Adventist church in his city was. Surprised, Ruth gave him the address.

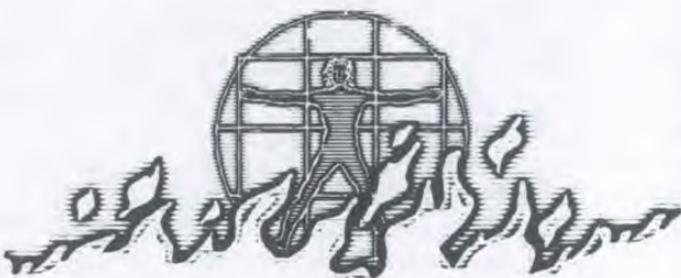
Some time later a group of Pathfinders stayed with Ruth while they toured the area. Heinz was visiting her at the time, and the Pathfinders invited Ruth and Heinz to join them on Sabbath. The group's pastor held a baptism that day and asked if anyone would like to prepare for baptism. Heinz stood up! Ruth contacted a pastor from the area where Heinz lived and asked him to visit Heinz. He did, and Heinz was eventually baptized.

Ruth remembers that she almost did not take this troubled teen into her home. But she is so glad that God allowed her to care for him and pray for him and love him for God.

Ruth Wetzel (left) lives in northern Germany. Charlotte Ishkanian is editor of *Mission*.



Invented by the Devil



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Eccles. 12:14; Matt. 12:33-37; Acts 17:30, 31; Rev. 20:11-21:5.

MEMORY TEXT: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24, NKJV).

KEY QUESTIONS: Where does the idea of hell and eternal torment come from? What are the consequences of such a doctrine? How would you prove to a friend that this doctrine is false?

DEVIL INSPIRED. Once you believe in the immortality of persons in the form of "spirits" and these "spirits" are wicked, what do you do with them? Satan's answer? Hell. With this doctrine he tried to shift his own cruel character onto our heavenly Father.

"After the Fall, Satan bade his angels make a special effort to inculcate the belief in man's natural immortality; and having induced the people to receive this error, they were to lead them on to conclude that the sinner would live in eternal misery. Now the prince of darkness . . . represents God as a revengeful tyrant, declaring that He plunges into hell all those who do not please Him. . . .

"How repugnant to every emotion of love and mercy, and even to our sense of justice, is the doctrine that the wicked dead are tormented with fire and brimstone in an eternally burning hell; that for the sins of a brief earthly life they are to suffer torture as long as God shall live."

—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 534, 535.

TRADITION (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 23:15, 33; Mark 7:6, 7; 2 Tim. 4:1-5).

The Hebrew word *sheol* and the Greek word *hades* are often translated "hell." The original words in both Testaments simply mean "death" or "the grave." But throughout the centuries, the word *hell* has come to mean a place of endless punishment for the wicked. As you read the following verses with both meanings in mind, notice what a vast difference of interpretation there can be. "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement" (Isa. 28:15). "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31).

The idea of a conscious state immediately after death began appearing in Jewish literature after the 70 years captivity in Babylon. By the time of Jesus, it had become part of Jewish tradition. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 831.) Such concepts, possibly from Babylon or Persia, were embellished in later centuries by false interpretations of Scripture within the Christian church. For most of the early church fathers, hell served as a place for demons and impenitent sinners. In the Middle Ages, people's imagination was spurred by Dante's *Inferno*, which said that hell was in the fiery depths of the earth. Luther and Calvin rejected many such portrayals but failed to reject the traditional teaching of eternal punishment. (See *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Edgar W. Smith, Jr., ed. [Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982], vol. 2, pp. 677-679.) The Roman Catholic Church, as well as other Christian denominations, still teach that "souls" eternally suffer the punishments of hell. However, there is an exception to this. According to the Catholic faith, there is also a place called purgatory where those who have committed "lesser" sins are purified by fire before they go to heaven.

Discuss how a convert may become "twice the son of hell."
Matt. 15:1-20. Then list the areas of danger.

Jesus called the leaders of the people blind guides. If they were not careful, He predicted both the people and their leaders would fall into the ditch. In Revelation 3:18, Jesus invites His people everywhere, especially those living in the last days, to buy eye salve that they might see and understand. The mixture of scriptural teaching with human traditions is what characterizes false religion (Rev. 17:1-6).

If Jesus were here today, what traditions that we hold on to would He denounce?

BIBLICAL CLARITY (Neh. 8:1, 2, 8; Isa. 28:9, 10; John 16:13; Acts 8:26-35).

One principle of biblical interpretation is to uphold the unity of Scripture. This means not only accepting the Scripture as a whole but also accepting the Bible as a unit, written by one Author, because all of Scripture was given by inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). In practice, this means we need to let the Bible in one place interpret what it means in another, carefully comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Explain how the following texts in each group clarify each other: (1) Matt. 25:41,46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6,7; (2) Mark 9:43-48 and Jer. 17:27; (3) Isa. 66:22-24 and Mal. 4:1-3; (4) Rev. 14:9-11; 20:10; Exod. 12:24; 1 Sam. 1:22, 28; Jon. 1:17; 2:6.

Words like *everlasting*, or *eternal*, and *forever* are translated from a Greek word meaning “lasting for an age,” in the sense of being continuous and not subject to change. Also, the word was used to describe the tenure of an emperor who held office for life. Therefore, its duration must be determined by nature of the person or thing it describes. Tiberius Caesar, for instance, ruled for 23 years. The emphasis is on the permanency of the results, not on a process that continues endlessly. Eternal fire would therefore mean that the results of it are never to be reversed. It destroys most effectively. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 512, 513; Matt. 3:12; 25:41; Jude 7; 2 Peter 2:6; Jer. 17:27; 2 Chron. 36:19.)

The word used to describe a place of punishment is *geenna*, which is the Greek form of *Ge Hinnom*, the Valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem. Here the heathen sacrificed and burned their children to the god Molech (2 Chron. 28:3; 31:1, 6). It also was known as the Valley of Slaughter, where the dead bodies of slain Israelites were buried until there was no more room, and the corpses that were not buried became food for birds (Jer. 7:32, 33).

Tradition holds that later the Valley of Slaughter became a place outside Jerusalem for burning rubbish and carcasses. This insight clarifies what Jesus meant when He warned the scribes and Pharisees about “unquenchable fire” and “everlasting punishment.” (See *SDA Bible Dictionary*, pp. 455, 456.)

Many people who believe that the doctrine of hell is disgusting believe instead that everyone will be saved. What does such a belief lead to?

How would you explain to someone that this doctrine is also false?

ACCOUNTABILITY (Eccles. 12:14; Matt. 12:33-37; Acts 17:30, 31; Rom. 14:10-12).

If righteous “souls” go to heaven immediately after death and if unrighteous “souls” go to hell immediately after death, then there is really no need for a judgment. But Scripture clearly teaches that we will be held accountable for what we do.

On what basis can God hold us accountable for what we do, even though we are born with a sinful human nature? Rom. 1:18-20; 2:11-16.

God reveals Himself to us in three ways: (1) by internal revelation to our reason and conscience; (2) by external revelation in the works of creation (Ps. 19:1-4); (3) by special revelation in the Scriptures, especially in the Person and work of Christ. God gave us reason and conscience and made us capable of seeing and investigating His works. It is possible even for the heathen to recognize and acknowledge the power of an intelligent Being in the works of creation. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 478.)

In light of universal accountability, how do you understand the meaning of Psalm 87:1-7?

A theme of this psalm is the universality of humankind (compare Acts 17:26, 27) and the inclusion in God’s family of women and men from every race, nationality, and people. Where people are born is not as important as who they are in relation to God. It is not some outward sign such as circumcision that counts but what is in the heart (see Rom. 2:28, 29).

In the broader sense, this psalm also addresses problems such as the circumstances of their upbringing and what parents they had. A loving God takes all into account. But while God fully understands the human predicament, He does not gloss over evil (see John 9:41; James 4:17; Acts 17:31).

What new insights has today’s study given you into the character of God and into your own life?

How can you become more sensitive to the spiritual needs of other church members of different ethnic backgrounds and those not of our faith?

COURT IN SESSION (Dan. 7:9, 10; Rom. 14:10-12; Rev. 20:11-13).

The Bible teaches three phases of God's final judgment: (1) the pre-Advent judgment (the judgment of believers before Christ comes), (2) the millennial judgment (the judgment of the wicked dead), (3) the executive judgment (at the end of the millennium when justice against sin will be carried out and a new earth will be created).

Match the three phases of judgment to the texts:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Dan. 7:9, 10 | _____ A. Executive judgment |
| 2. Rev. 20:4 | _____ B. Millennial judgment |
| 3. Rev. 20:12-15 | _____ C. Pre-Advent judgment |

To understand the role of Christ in the judgment, we need to understand how the Jewish judicial system worked. Through the centuries from patriarchal times to the founding of Israel and finally to the monarchy, the basic principle of jurisprudence remained the same. A person was innocent until proven guilty. In Deuteronomy 19:15-21, the picture is simple. There are no defense or prosecuting attorneys. There is the judge, the accused, and the accuser.

The judge has a dual role: (1) to defend the accused and (2) to render a decision. If the accusations of the accuser proved false, he would have to suffer the penalty he thought to inflict on the accused. A false testimony was unforgivable, for it represented potential murder in the heart of false witnesses. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1022.) Notice the simplicity of the court when two women wanted Solomon to judge whose baby the infant was. Notice also the decision he rendered (1 Kings. 3:16-28). Remember, too, that Jesus considered hatred in the heart equivalent to murder (Matt. 5:21, 22).

In light of the court procedure mentioned above, relate John 5:22 and 1 John 2:1 to Zechariah 3:15, Romans 3:31, and Revelation 12:10.

How has this brief insight into the Jewish court procedure helped you understand God better and the role of Christ on your behalf? Should we be afraid of the judgment if the Judge, who is also our Defense Attorney, is our Friend? Case closed!

RENOVATION OR RESTORATION (2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 22:11; 20:4-21:5).

Some Christians believe that during the millennium people will be given another chance to be saved. There are numerous theories about what exactly will take place. But the general agreement is that in a time of peace, a golden age, people will hear the gospel again and have another opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and King. Those who do not will be destroyed. Nowhere does Scripture speak of such an additional chance to be saved during the millennium.

From the above texts listed after today's title, select the one that proves that the theory of another chance during the millennium is not biblical. Then compare your selection with John 5:24-30.

There is also the false concept that the fire spoken of in 2 Peter 3:10-13 is not ordinary fire but the fire of the Holy Spirit, similar to the tongues of fire that came upon the disciples at Pentecost. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, God will cleanse the earth and make it suitable for His Son's rule. (See Billy Graham, *World Aflame* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1965], pp. 246, 247.)

While Christ is the answer to all our human problems—physical, social, political, financial, and otherwise—to believe He will return to simply renovate the earth and make it more inhabitable, even totally righteous, is not biblical.

This is one point in which Seventh-day Adventists differ from most other Christians. Christ will not come to renovate the earth at the inception of the millennium but to destroy it (Jer. 4:23-26; Matt. 24:37-39; Rev. 19:11-16). Without question, we join in the joyous chorus of Christians who look for His return. However, the new heavens and the new earth will appear at the end of the millennium (Rev. 21:1-5).

Describe in your own words the sequence of events in Revelation 19, 20, and 21.

How can Seventh-day Adventists share the biblical truth about the events of the Second Coming without seeming to be alarmists?

While we focus on Christ and not the crisis of the last days, how can we share the biblical truth about what will happen when He returns without seeming to doubt the faith of our fellow Christians?

FURTHER STUDY: To learn about the fate of the wicked, read the following verses: Rom. 6:23; Ps. 37:9, 20, 34; 68:2; 104:35; 145:20; Mal. 4:1; Matt. 13:30, 40; 2 Pet. 3:10; 2 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 2:14.

Read *The Story of Redemption*, "Satan's Delusions," pp. 388-392.

Recently some non-Adventist pastors and evangelists have spoken against the doctrine of eternal punishment and in favor of the biblical teaching that the wicked will be destroyed and be no more. One such preacher and lay scholar is Edward William Fudge, in his book entitled *The Fire That Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of Final Punishment* (Houston, Tex.: Providential Press, 1982).

Beginning his research he says, "The greatest reason for talking about hell is also the simplest and most obvious. Jesus our Savior spoke of it—more than once and in the most serious tones. Whenever He speaks, we will do well to listen. We also will do well to be careful how we hear" (p. 21). In concluding his research he says, "The Old and New Testaments alike, in a multiplicity of ways, terms, figures, pictures, expressions and examples, declare time and time again that the wicked finally will pass away and be no more, that righteousness will then fill the universe, and that God will then forever be all in all. Not one time in all of Scripture does God say that any human being will be made immortal for the purpose of suffering conscious everlasting torment" (p. 434).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. After studying this week's lesson, how would you answer the Key Questions in Sabbath's lesson?
2. Review the Memory Text. In light of the lessons this week about the judgment, how would you explain Christ's statement that those who believe in Him "shall not come into judgment"?

SUMMARY: Satan devised the concept of natural immortality and eternal punishment to discredit God and justify the claim that God treated him unjustly. He was able to plant this doctrine in the Christian church and by it generate either an atmosphere of fear or an attitude that God is too good to destroy life. While God is merciful, He is also just. The wicked will be no more, and the righteous will cover the earth.



The Teacher Had Something to Learn—1

Becky Mercill

Suleman (SOO-leh-man) Samson smiled at the men standing before him. Yes, he would let these Adventists use his school for evangelistic meetings. *It will give me an opportunity to refute their beliefs*, Samson thought.

Samson was proud of his school and his position as headmaster. He had struggled to get an education during the difficult years of war in South Sudan. When he was in the third grade, the English-speaking school that he attended was forced to close because of the war. The school did not reopen, so when Samson was 18, he traveled to Juba, the largest city in South Sudan, hoping to continue his education. But the schools there also had been closed because of fighting. So Samson took work as a house boy while he waited to continue his education.

When the schools in Juba finally reopened, Samson enrolled. But the Sudanese government now controlled the region, and classes were taught in Arabic. Samson had to start over in school. Twelve years later he finally completed his studies and returned to his home area to teach and eventually become headmaster of a school.

When in July 1996 some Adventist believers asked Samson permission to use his school for evangelistic meetings, he agreed, not because he believed what they taught, but because he was confident that he could teach these Adventists a thing or two about religion.

Before the opening meeting, Samson got drunk on the local brew to bolster his courage. He arrived at the meeting, and the ushers offered him a seat on the front row and a Bible to use. When the preacher began talking about Jesus' second coming, Samson sat spellbound. He had never heard anything like this!

The pastor read from the book of Matthew, but Suleman had no idea where Matthew was. Some people sitting next to him helped him find the verses. After the meeting Samson wanted to take the Bible home

with him, but the usher explained that he had to come to every meeting before he could receive his own Bible. Angry, Samson stomped away from the schoolhouse. He would find a Bible somewhere else!

(continued next week)



Suleman Samson (left). Becky Mercill wrote this while serving with ADRA/South Sudan, in Nairobi, Kenya.

Human Vulnerability



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Lev. 19:31; Ps. 106:28; 1 Cor. 10:20; Rev. 16:14.

MEMORY TEXT: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 14:12, NKJV).

KEY QUESTIONS: How has Satan taken advantage of the damaged image of God in people? What methods has he used to turn them away from God?

OVERVIEW. So far this quarter, we have looked at human nature as God created it, what He intended for the human race to be, and what it became because of sin. From Scripture, we learned what happens to people when they die and what the future holds. The body returns to dust. The spirit (the breath or spark of life) returns to God who gave it. The soul (the composite of dust and breath) is then no more. Death came because of sin, but the hope of life comes through Jesus Christ.

When Adam and Eve sinned, the image of God was marred, not obliterated. There remained in people the desire for goodness, a longing in their hearts for the relationship with God that they had lost. It is this desire, this longing for spiritual oneness with their Creator, that Satan took advantage of in order to bring them under his control. One of the most successful avenues through which he has attempted to do so is through spiritualism.

But “God has expressly forbidden all pretended communication with departed spirits.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 556.

THE APPEAL OF MAGIC (Exod. 7:8-13).

The story of the Exodus brings into focus the power of the supernatural—the power of God to turn a shepherd's rod into a serpent and the power of Satan to seemingly do likewise with the rods of Pharaoh's men.

When Moses and Aaron went to see Pharaoh, they did exactly what God told them to do. They soon discovered that Pharaoh's wise men, sorcerers, and magicians were apparently able to do the same things through magic.

The use of magic in ancient Egypt has been well documented. Archeological discoveries have shown a snake charmer holding a serpent made as stiff as a rod up in the air before his gods and a snake that goes against other snakes and devours them. Exactly how the magicians were able to do this is not easy to explain scientifically. No doubt by use of illusion and deceptive appearances they were able to cast spells over what appeared to be their rods but which could actually have been serpents made immobile by applying pressure on the nape of their necks. They could also have done so by the use of demonic power. (See *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 347.)

Explain how it was possible for Satan to control Pharaoh's vision so that he saw the magicians' rods turn into serpents (Exod. 7:12).

"The magicians did not really cause their rods to become serpents; but by magic, aided by the great deceiver, they were able to produce this appearance. It was beyond the power of Satan to change the rods to living serpents. The prince of evil, though possessing all the wisdom and might of an angel fallen, has not power to create, or to give life; this is the prerogative of God alone. But all that was in Satan's power to do, he did; he produced a counterfeit. To human sight the rods were changed to serpents.

"Satan is constantly seeking to counterfeit the work of Christ. . . . He leads men to account for the miracles of Christ by making them appear to be the result of human skill. . . ."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 264.

When duplicating Moses's and Aaron's actions, what long-range plan had Satan in mind besides hindering the deliverance of Israel? See above reference, pp. 264, 265.

If Satan has the power to change people's vision and lead them to believe an illusion, what mental guide can you use to keep yourself from believing what you see?

THE ECSTASY OF WORSHIP (Exod. 32:1-8).

In Exodus 32:1-8, Moses is on the mountain receiving God's Ten Commandments and instructions regarding true worship while below Satan leads the people into an ecstasy of false worship, consented to by Aaron, the high priest.

Describe how the people responded to Aaron's announcement proclaiming "a feast to the Lord." Exod. 32:5, 6.

Satan was there to quickly exploit the human condition of conflict between the flesh and the spirit. As long as the Israelites were under the restraining influence of Moses and depended on the leadership of their "unseen" God, they led a fairly spiritual life. But when Moses was seemingly gone and God was not heard from, they reverted back to idolatry. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 665.)

Explain the influence of Aaron's leadership and the excuse he gave for what he did. Exod. 32:21-26.

"If Aaron had had courage to stand for the right, irrespective of consequences, he could have prevented that apostasy. If he had unswervingly maintained his own allegiance to God, if he had cited the people to the perils of Sinai, and had reminded them of their solemn covenant with God to obey his law, the evil would have been checked. But his compliance with the desires of the people, and the calm assurance with which he proceeded to carry out their plans, emboldened them to go to greater lengths in sin than had before entered their minds. . . . they were filled with admiration of his gentleness and patience. But God seeth not as man sees. Aaron's yielding spirit and his desire to please had blinded his eyes to the enormity of the crime he was sanctioning."

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 323.

In light of Exodus 32:1-26, discuss the spiritual reliability of human nature and the quickness with which it can revert to savagery when influenced by demonic forces (compare Gal. 5:19-25; 1 Cor. 10:11-13).

Has your spiritual life had only a few "rough" spots other than the day-to-day tussles? If this is the case, how do you know how strong you will be under certain temptations? Would you be as firm if you were faced with some of the difficulties and temptations others are facing?

HUMAN DESPERATION (1 Sam. 28:3-25).

Fearful that he might be defeated by the Philistines, Saul was willing to go to any length to find out what to do. Seeking advice from the witch of Endor was the final step in a series of blunders that led Saul further and further from the Lord until the Lord no longer answered him. Pride and love of power, inherent in human nature, had gradually done their work in Israel's first king.

What Bible texts studied in previous lessons prove that Samuel did not really appear to Saul at the invitation of the witch of Endor?

Describe what events in Saul's life led him to consult the medium rather than the Lord. 1 Sam. 28:6, 15-18.

Explain why obedience is better than sacrifice.

Why did Samuel compare Saul's disobedience to witchcraft?

What is the relationship between these two sins against God? 1 Sam. 15:10-23.

"The Holy Spirit had been granted to Saul to enlighten his understanding and soften his heart. He had received faithful instruction and reproof from the prophet of God. And yet how great was his perversity! The history of Israel's first king presents a sad example of the power of early wrong habits. In his youth, Saul did not love and fear God; and that impetuous spirit, not early trained to submission, was ever ready to rebel against divine authority. Those who in their youth cherish a sacred regard for the will of God, and who faithfully perform the duties of their position, will be prepared for higher service in after-life. But men cannot for years pervert the powers that God has given them, and then, when they choose to change, find these powers fresh and free for an entirely opposite course."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 622.

What habits of yours help you to serve God more faithfully? Which ones keep you from serving Him as you would like to?

Do you believe God's grace can help you overcome bad habits? If yes, how will His grace specifically help you?

IDOLS AND THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN (Ezek. 8:1-14; Jer. 7:16-18).

Daniel and Ezekiel were both taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar—Daniel to the city of Babylon in 605 B.C. and Ezekiel near Nippur by the River Chebar in 597 B.C. The captives living with Ezekiel confidently believed that their captivity would be short and that God would not allow Nebuchadnezzar to capture Jerusalem again nor destroy the temple. But when Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonians took Jerusalem after a siege of two years, in 586 B.C. They captured the city, destroyed the temple, and took most of the population captive. Repeatedly, Ezekiel had warned the captives about what would happen. But they stubbornly refused to believe it. To help Ezekiel understand why Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed, and to strengthen his confidence in God's message, the Holy Spirit gave Ezekiel a vision of what was happening in Jerusalem and of the heathen rites of worship that were being conducted in the temple. (See *SDA Bible Dictionary*, pp. 783, 784, 353-355.)

Describe the types of idols the priests were worshiping. Ezek. 8:6-12.

Some commentators think that the idols on the walls of the temple were evil spirits of the lower world, the mortuary deities of Egypt. Serpents, crocodiles, beetles, baboons, etc. were often featured in Egyptian tombs, where they were generally painted on the walls. This means that the "abominations" the priests were practicing in the temple might have included attempted communications with the dead.

Describe what Ezekiel saw the women doing. Ezek. 8:13, 14; Jer. 7:16-18.

Tammuz was the Sumerian god of fertility and rain, similar to Baal, who would die in the winter and be resurrected in the spring. The Queen of Heaven was Ishtar, the Assyro-Babylonian goddess of love and fertility, often associated with the worship of stars and planets, which was forbidden as early as the time of Moses (Deut. 4:19; 17:2-5). This kind of idolatry was not only practiced privately but by whole families, undoubtedly including children.

Compare what Ezekiel saw with the foolishness of humans described in Isaiah 44:9-20.

What "false gods," if any, are you depending on or worshiping? How can the Holy Spirit help you in this area?

WORSHIPING THE SUN (Exod. 27:9-19; Ezek. 8:15-18).

Describe how the sanctuary in the wilderness was positioned. Why was such a position important? Exod. 27:9-19.

The position of the sanctuary, its articles of furniture as well as its services, all had symbolic significance. For example, God provided only one way into the sanctuary. This entrance leading into the presence of God points to Christ, who is the door (John 10:7), the way to the Father (John 14:7), and the only One through whom we can be saved (Acts 4:12). The general position of the sanctuary also was important. The entrance faced east so when the worshipers walked into the courtyard and faced the altar of sacrifice they would be turning their backs toward the sun, symbolizing their rejection of idol worship.

Sun worship was common in the ancient Near East. God warned His people against this kind of idolatry practiced by the nations around them (2 Kings 21:5; 23:5, 11). For the people in countries such as Assyria and Egypt, as well as for those in Canaan, the sun usually personified one or more of their gods. The ancient Egyptians worshiped the sun as Re (or Amon-Re). Under Amenhotep IV, the solar disk became the royal family's object of worship.

Although forbidden in the Mosaic law (Deut. 4:19; 17:3), sun worship became a problem in ancient Israel, particularly during the period of the Assyrian dominance. The kings of Judah dedicated horses to the sun and stationed them, along with chariots, at the entrance of the house of Yahweh (2 Kings 23:11). These symbolized the horses and chariots used by the sun-god to traverse the heavens.

Discuss the significance of the order in which Ezekiel saw the abominations practiced by the priests in the temple. Ezek. 8:6-18.

What Ezekiel saw in vision confirmed what God had told him. In spite of the previous two captivities of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the people and priests continued to worship idols and turn their backs on Jehovah. The Lord had no choice but to withdraw His protection from the city and allow Nebuchadnezzar to destroy both the city and the temple. What is it about human nature, about men and women who worship God, that they can be so blind, so willful not to see and hear and believe what God has said?

Do you believe what God has said, what Jesus has told us? How have you taken His prophecies to heart, particularly the prophecies of the last days?

FURTHER STUDY: How does Paul speak about the human conflict regarding spiritualism? Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

For additional insight into the history of sun worship, see *Bible Student's Source Book*, vol. 9 of the *SDA Bible Commentary* series.

Read *The Great Controversy*, "Can Our Dead Speak to Us?", pp. 531-562; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, "Ancient and Modern Sorcery," pp. 683-689.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. After studying this week's lesson, how would you answer the Key Questions in Sabbath's lesson?
2. This is a true story. Karen's father was a spiritualist and hoped that Karen would become one, too. Instead, she became a Seventh-day Adventist! If you were Karen, how would you tell your father that his "religion" was false? Perhaps part of your answer for question 1 will help you answer this question.
3. How can we contend against beings superior to ourselves? Do we think we can mentally compete with a being like Lucifer, who was the highest created intelligent being next to God? While obviously Christians should not become involved in spiritualism, is it permissible to experiment with quasi-spiritualistic phenomena? Explain your answer.
4. What part do humans play in the warfare against Satan? How would you apply Ephesians 6:10-18 to your own life?
5. What did Jesus mean when He said to Peter, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:31, 32, NKJV)?

SUMMARY: Ever since God expressed His love for humankind, Satan has used whatever means possible to destroy the human race. One such means is for him to take advantage of the desire in the human heart for fellowship with the Creator. To do this, Satan works through mediums to establish contact with the "spirit" world. Another approach Satan uses is to lead women and men to worship "idols" of their own making. Nevertheless, "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59:19, NKJV).



The Teacher Had Something to Learn—2

Becky Mercill

Suleman Sampson had attended the evangelistic meeting in his schoolhouse, intending to set the speaker straight on religious matters. But the pastor's message on Christ's second coming fascinated him. He wanted to take a Bible home after the meeting, but the usher told him that he would have to attend all the meetings before he could have the Bible. Samson tried to buy a Bible in town, but the shops were closed. Finally he borrowed his neighbor's Bible.

That night he sat beside the fire and told his relatives what he had heard at the meeting that day. He could remember only one Bible reference that the pastor had quoted: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. He read these verses, which explain how Jesus will return to rescue those who love Him to live with Him forever.

Later that night Samson dreamed that someone came into his bedroom and crushed his head against the bed. When he awoke, pain shot through his head. It subsided enough so that he could attend the meetings, but later the pain returned with a force that made him sick. This happened every day, but the pain did not stop Samson from attending the meetings or accepting the truths he heard. The pastor learned about Samson's mysterious headaches and prayed for him. After the meetings ended, he took Samson to Juba for a check-up.

Samson stayed with his aunt while in Juba to see the doctor. His two brothers, Wisely and Paul, were also living with her while they attended school. Samson invited them to study the Bible with him, and on Saturday he took his brothers to church. But when his aunt learned that Samson no longer followed the family's religion, she became angry and hid their Bibles. The pastor gave Samson and his brothers three more Bibles.

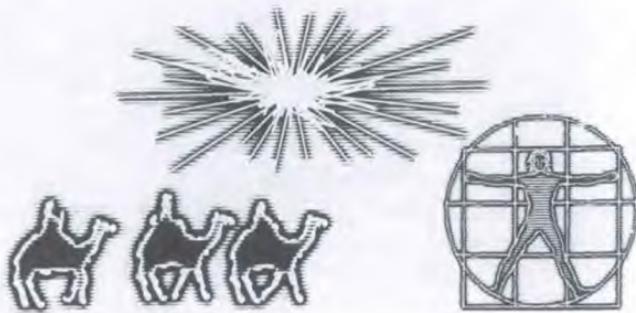
Samson shared his growing faith with neighbors as well, and invited them to study the Bible with him. He noticed that the pain in his head disappeared whenever he was studying the Bible. Soon after Samson and his brother, Wisely, were baptized. Samson realized that the pain in his head was gone.

(to be continued)



Suleman Samson (left). Becky Mercill wrote this while serving with ADRA/South Sudan in Nairobi, Kenya.

Encounter



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 22:31; 1 Pet. 5:6-11.

MEMORY TEXT: “**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”** (Matthew 4:4, NKJV).

KEY QUESTION: How did the coming of the Messiah affect Satan's activity?

BORN IN HOSTILE TERRITORY. Last week we studied how through spiritualism Satan attempts to take advantage of our desire for spiritual oneness with God in order to defeat the plan of salvation. Spiritualism is not the only way Satan tried to destroy the plan of salvation. He also tried to make Christ sin while He lived on earth. When the Son of God took on human nature, Satan thought he could at least defeat Him as he did Adam. Satan's ultimate aim, however, was to kill Him.

Herod's reign was full of bloodshed. He even killed members of his own family to stay on the throne. The news that a baby king was born not far from Jerusalem infuriated him. He was determined to kill this new rival, no matter what the consequences. What part did Satan play in using Herod's perverted nature to try to destroy the newly born Son of God? (see Rev. 12:1-5, 9). What indication do we have that Herod passed on his character traits to his son? (see Matt. 2:19-22).

As you study this week's lesson, try to identify your character weaknesses. What can you do to prevent Satan from taking advantage of these weaknesses and rendering you unable to claim salvation?

EDUCATION (Luke 2:39-52; John 7:14, 15; Acts 4:13).

What did Jesus mean when He said that He must be “about My Father’s business” (Luke 2:42-49)?

As a servant, Jesus laid aside the full use of His divine powers (Phil. 2:7). His mind and body developed according to the laws of childhood. He gained knowledge as all humans do. To say that Jesus “grew in wisdom” does not detract from His deity. His intimate acquaintance with Scripture shows how diligently His mother taught Him and how much of His early years He spent studying the Word of God. Early training and the right education have a powerful influence in shaping the conscience and thinking. Conscience can become insensitive to spiritual things and can even harden against truth (1 Tim. 4:1, 2). In His early years, Jesus’ conscience was shaped by His mother, who under the guidance of the Holy Spirit taught Him from Scripture.

List reasons why Jesus chose not to study under the rabbis (John 7:15).

What would have happened to Jesus if He had received a rabbinical training?

The rabbis were surprised that Jesus was so well informed. They believed being truly educated meant receiving an education from a recognized teacher and closely associating with that teacher in service to him. Self-education was considered vastly inferior to such training.

It was Satan’s intention to shape Jesus’ mind and conscience through false education. He knows that the human conscience can be trained and that through it he can control human behavior. This he attempted to do with Jesus. But Jesus rightly refused to be trained in the customs and traditions of the rabbis.

“In the days of Christ the established teachers instructed men in the traditions of the fathers, in childish fables, mingled with the opinions of those who they thought were high authorities. Yet neither high nor low could discern any ray of light in their teaching. . . . He rescued truth from its obscurity, and set it in its proper framework, to shine in its original luster.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 183, 184.

When seeking solutions to problems and when looking for guidance, how often do you find yourself relying more on opinions and traditions than you do on the Word of God?

TEMPTATION (Matt. 4:1-11).

Explain why the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness. Matt. 4:1, 2.

The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted, or tested. In Scripture “tempting” or “testing” can mean to reveal or develop character as well as to invite to do evil. In the case of Jesus, it meant both. For us to “tempt” or “test” God is wrong because it reflects a lack of faith. In Jesus’ experience, God clearly purposed to test Him just as Israel was tested. And Jesus’ responses prove that He knew what Israel’s wilderness experience was all about. (See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 8, p. 112.)

Some Christians believe that Christ could not have been overcome by temptation. But unless there is a possibility of yielding, temptation is not temptation. Christ could not have been tempted in all points as we are (Heb. 4:15) if He could not or would not have sinned. Christ experienced to the fullest extent what we experience when striving against sin. That is why He understands us and why we can come to Him to find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16). “He not only became an exile from the heavenly courts, but for us took the risk of failure and eternal loss.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 131.

What basic needs of human nature did Satan appeal to when he tempted Christ? Explain what Jesus meant by the responses He gave. Matt. 4:3-10.

Now match the following texts with the temptations:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------|--------------------|
| 1st: Health and life | _____ | A. 1 Chron. 21:1-8 |
| 2nd: Spiritual pride | _____ | B. Ezek. 16:48-50 |
| 3rd: Wealth | _____ | C. Job 2:1-10 |

Principles we can learn from Christ’s experience in the wilderness include the following: (1) Obedience is more important than physical survival. (2) God’s rescuing power is not something to be experimented with but something to be quietly trusted in from day to day. (3) The plan of salvation allows no room for compromise.

How has Satan tempted you regarding health and life, spiritual pride, and wealth? How can believing that Jesus was tempted as you are improve your relationship with Him?

EMBARRASSMENT AND SHAME (Matt. 9:32-34; 12:22-30; Luke 23:33-41; Isa. 53:3-6; Heb. 12:1, 2).

Discuss how the hatred of the Pharisees influenced not only their thinking but Jesus' response. Matt. 9:32-34; 12:24; John 8:48, 49; Matt. 12:26-28.

Human reason is no guarantee of truth. Our likes and dislikes, selfishness, hatred, prejudice, and desire to control can easily influence our thinking (Matt. 15:18-20). "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Prov. 16:25, NKJV). God invites us to forsake our thoughts, to come and reason with Him, and to think His thoughts after Him (Isa. 1:18; 55:6-9).

Describe the impact that physical and mental abuse and public shame must have had on the human nature of Christ. Matt. 27:26-29; Luke 23:33-41; Isa. 53:1-6; Heb. 12:1, 2.

Satan did all he could to undermine Christ's human nature in order to get Him to sin. In addition to being scourged twice, people jeered Him because He could not carry the cross. Then He suffered the torture of crucifixion (the most horrible kind of death the Romans could devise). Christ hung on the cross completely naked, exposed to public shame. We cannot comprehend that the Creator of the universe, the Son of God, allowed Himself to be thus exposed and shamed because He loved us so.

With the last ounce of His strength, Christ cried out, "It is finished," "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46; John 19:30). All heaven triumphed in Christ's victory. For the angels and the unfallen beings throughout the universe, the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They, too, share in the fruits of Christ's victory. Satan was now a defeated foe. In Christ, there had been one human being whom he could not defeat, who had not come under his control. The human race was not totally his. His kingdom was lost, and he knew it. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 758.)

How does it make you feel when you contemplate the horrible shame and agony Jesus suffered for you? How does knowing that Christ suffered on your behalf enable you to cope with hardship and persecution when they occur on the job, in the home, or elsewhere?

How much do you appreciate what He has done for you? How can you better show your appreciation?

CONTINUED CONFRONTATION (Rev. 12:10-12; Acts 13:4-12).

Although Satan knew that he had been defeated by Christ at Calvary and that he had lost his kingdom, his hatred for the human race did not diminish. Instead, he turned this hatred for the gospel and for anyone who accepts Christ as their Saviour and Lord into a rage (Rev. 12:10-12).

Describe the encounter Paul had with Satan during his first missionary journey. Acts 13:4-8.

Belief in fortunetellers and magic is one sign of a declining civilization. So it was in the days of Rome. Even an intelligent man like Sergius Paulus kept private wizards and sorcerers who dealt in magic and spells.

Elymas, on the other hand, was a Jew, who like others of his countrymen, had offered their services to the rich and elite on the basis of the religious prestige of his people and boasted that in addition to the “sacred” books, he had spells and charms that allegedly came from Solomon (see *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 282).

Why did Paul call Elymas “a son of the devil”? Was Paul’s severity with Elymas justified? Explain your answer. Acts 13:9-11; John 8:44.

Compare what happened to Elymas with Paul’s experience before his conversion. Acts 9:1-18.

Instead of teaching the governor the Jewish faith and helping him to know God, Elymas led him to depend on sorcery and magic. He had perverted the ways of the Lord. Paul was about to teach him that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was displeased with what he had done. Could it be that Paul had his own experience in mind when he pronounced the sentence against Elymas?

“The forces of evil are engaged in unceasing warfare against the agencies appointed for the spread of the gospel and these powers of darkness are especially active when the truth is proclaimed before men of repute and sterling integrity. . . . But the faithful gospel worker need not fear defeat at the hand of the enemy; for it is his privilege to be endowed with power from above to withstand every satanic influence.”

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 167, 168.

In your part of the world, how does the use of fortunetellers and magic mark the decline of civilization?

HARASSMENT (Acts 16:16-24).

Paul's experience at Philippi was not a happy one. Nevertheless, the good news of Jesus Christ continued to spread among the Gentiles.

Describe what the young woman with “the spirit of divination” did to harass Paul. Also, discuss what caused him to be so upset about it. Acts 16:17, 18.

The title “the Most High God” was used not only by the Hebrew people to refer to Yahweh but also by the Greeks of their god Zeus. To Paul, the announcement regarding salvation or the way to be saved meant deliverance from sin. For the people of Philippi, however, salvation meant being delivered from fate. But while Paul and Silas tried to clarify the difference, the young woman’s harassment caused the people to be confused. That’s when Paul commanded the “evil spirit” to come out of her. Restored to her right mind, the young woman became a Christian and together with Lydia formed the nucleus of the church at Philippi.

Why were Paul and Silas arrested? Describe the sequence of events that led to their vindication and the conversion of the jailer. Acts 16:19-40.

What Paul did for this slave girl was not appreciated by her masters. They were more interested in the commercial gain they lost than they were in the girl’s welfare.

“Terrible is the struggle that takes place between the forces of good and of evil in important centers where the messengers of truth are called upon to labor. ‘We wrestle not against flesh and blood,’ declares Paul, ‘but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.’ Ephesians 6:12. Till the close of time there will be a conflict between the church of God and those who are under the control of evil angels.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 219.

What lessons can you learn from these experiences that you can apply to your own life? How would you respond if you were unfairly arrested and deprived of your liberty?

Would you have baptized someone after only one night of instruction? Would you continue to share your faith in a place where you were not wanted? What would you do?

FURTHER STUDY: For a description of Satan and his work against the gospel and those who claim it, read 1 Peter 5:8. To learn how to protect yourself against his attacks, read Ephesians 6:10-18.

Also read any or all of the following from *The Desire of Ages*, "Days of Conflict," pp. 84-92; "The Temptation," pp. 114-123; "The Victory," pp. 124-131; "Calvary," pp. 741-757; "It Is Finished," pp. 758-764.

"Of the bitterness that falls to the lot of humanity, there was no part which Christ did not taste. There were those who tried to cast contempt upon Him because of His birth, and even in His childhood He had to meet their scornful looks and evil whisperings. If He had responded by an impatient word or look, if He had conceded to His brothers by even one wrong act, He would have failed of being a perfect example. Thus He would have failed of carrying out the plan for our redemption. Had He even admitted that there could be an excuse for sin, Satan would have triumphed, and the world would have been lost. This is why the tempter worked to make His life as trying as possible, that He might be led to sin."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 88.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. After studying this week's lesson, how would you answer the Key Question in Sabbath's lesson? Be sure your answer includes specific things brought out in the lesson.
2. What would you do if some of the events that happened to Jesus and His family happened to you? What sacrifices are you willing to make to give your children the kind of Christian education they need? Would you be willing to suffer torture and maybe even death for your faith?
3. What would you do if someone controlled by the devil tried to interfere with the Bible studies you were giving? Why do you think the men in jail with Paul and Silas didn't escape when the earthquake occurred?

SUMMARY: Satan uses every means available in his attempts to bring men and women under his control. He has exploited every human weakness to achieve his ends. His rage is expressly exhibited in the life of Christ and in the experiences of the early church.



The Teacher Had Something to Learn—3

Becky Mercill

Following his baptism, Suleman Samson returned to his job as headmaster of the school in Mundri, South Sudan. He started a branch Sabbath School, but the war made living in Mundri too dangerous. Suleman and his brother Wisely, who also had been baptized, returned to their home village. There they shared their faith and started a church. The war made communication and travel difficult, and it was impossible for a pastor to reach the area to baptize the new believers. Samson and his brother taught the people the best that they could, but some of the believers who were waiting for baptism became discouraged and stopped coming to church.

Samson and Wisely decided to do something. They sent Natana, a young convert, to Juba and on to Khartoum in hopes that he could receive theological training and be ordained.

Three years later the rebel army had regained the territory around the village, and people could again communicate with the outside world. By then Samson and Wisely had planted three churches and prepared 60 believers for baptism. They sent word to church headquarters asking that a pastor come to examine and baptize the new believers. A pastor from Zaire was able to reach the village, and the first baptism in the region in years was planned. Some people walked 70 miles to be baptized. Not everyone was able to attend this baptism, however, and another baptism was planned across the South Sudan border in Uganda. Some people walked up to seven days to reach the baptismal site, more than 300 miles away.

The new members wrote to church headquarters, telling them of their churches and asking for a pastor. Not long afterward Natana, the young man who had gone to Khartoum to study theology, returned to his village to serve as a lay pastor.

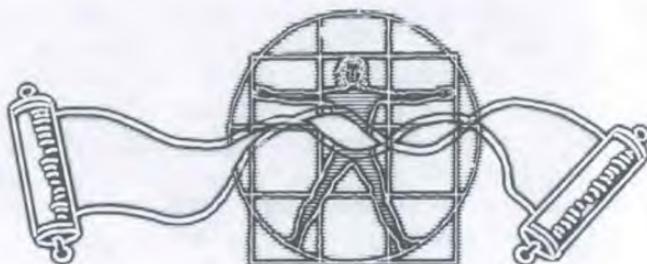
Natana wrote proposals to ADRA for agriculture programs and primary schools in the region. Union officials traveled to the region to study the needs and arranged for Global Mission lay preachers to begin working in the region.

(continued next week)



Becki Mercill (left) wrote this story while serving with ADRA/South Sudan. She has since returned to the United States. Suleman Samson is working for Global Mission in Maridi, South Sudan.

Scripture Twisting



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Tim. 1:3-5; 3:13-17; 4:1-4.

MEMORY TEXT: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16, NKJV).

KEY QUESTION: When Satan was unsuccessful in getting Christ to sin and when he saw that he could not stop the spread of the gospel, what did he do?

TRADITION OR SCRIPTURE? For centuries, the teachings of the Christian church were a mixture of Scripture and tradition. In God's providence, the time had come to give Scripture its rightful place and to make the Bible available to the people. The man whom God used to bring about this change was Martin Luther, in Germany. One example of the abuse of tradition was the sale of indulgences—the payment to the church for the forgiveness of personal sins as well as the sins of those suffering in the flames of purgatory. One seller of indulgences boasted, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." To Luther, this was bad theology. It prompted him to nail his 95 objections to the church door in Wittenberg. Thus he ignited the spark that flamed the Reformation and put him in direct confrontation with papal authority. Luther stood firm by his two great convictions—that salvation was by faith in Christ alone and that the Scriptures are the only standard for Christian faith and behavior.
—adapted from Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* (Waco, Tex.: Word Book Publishers, 1982), pp. 258, 259.

THE HOLY SPIRIT OR THE BIBLE? (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 John 4:1; Isa. 8:19, 20).

As the Reformation continued, so did Satan's attacks. Since he was not able to stop the spread of Scripture, he attempted to undermine its authority by leading men and women to misunderstand and misapply what it said. For instance, Luther had recommended that Thomas Müntzer, one of the ablest and best educated leaders of the lower classes, be a pastor of one of the Protestant churches. While pastoring this church, Müntzer developed his doctrine of the "inner light," or the direct and continued revelation of the Holy Spirit to each believer by means of dreams and ecstatic visions. He also criticized Luther for being slavishly bound to the Bible. This soon led to fanaticism and violence in what has been called the Peasant's revolt.—Harold J. Grimm, *The Reformation Era* (New York, N.Y.: The Macmillan Company, 1954), pp. 173, 174.

Luther denounced this fanatical movement and said, "To them the Holy Scriptures were but a dead letter, and they all began to cry, 'The Spirit! the Spirit!'"

Compare Satan's misuse of Scripture during the Reformation with his misuse of Scripture during his second temptation of Christ. Matt. 4:5-7.

Satan has not hesitated to quote Scripture. But while he is doing so, he manipulates it to suit his purpose and to make it appear as if the Scripture he quoted approves a sinful course of action. In the case of his temptation of Christ, while he quoted Psalm 91:11, 12, he took it from its context to mean that God would protect Christ no matter what He did because He was His beloved Son. But the psalm clearly teaches that God will protect His children only if they walk in His ways, not their own. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 313.)

Discuss the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Scripture. Isa. 8:19, 20; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 John 4:1. Why must the two never be separated?

As you walk the Christian path, commit yourself to the following advice: "Beware how you follow impulse, calling it the Holy Spirit. Some are in danger of doing this. The word of God urges us to be sound in the faith, able to give to everyone who asks, a reason for the hope that is in us."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 306.

SUCCESS AND THE SEDUCTIVE POWER OF CHARM (Luke 10:1-5, 17-20; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; Gal. 1:6-9).

Satan's efforts to undermine the gospel, and especially the authority of Scripture, did not stop with the Reformation. When the Advent movement of the nineteenth century began, he focused his attention on people committed to keeping all the commandments of God. His methods deserve careful attention, particularly since all of us have the same human nature to which Satan can appeal.

Moses Hull was a successful, young Adventist evangelist in the 1860s. During these early years, debates were used to draw crowds and spread the truth about the Sabbath. Hull was successful at this and began debating spiritualists, even converting one of them. Encouraged by this, he agreed to debate W. F. Jamieson, a spiritualist lecturer. During the debate, Hull came under the influence of an "evil spirit," whom he called Downing. And he soon felt, as he expressed it, that he was growing out of his Advent clothes and getting on higher ground. Before too long, he left the Adventist ministry, rejected the full authority of Scripture, and became a spiritualist.

From what she had seen in vision, Ellen White warned Elder Hull that he was standing on the brink of an awful gulf, that if he took one more step it would be final and his eternal destiny would be fixed (see *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 427). But more important than this, she said, "Already had evil angels telegraphed to Satan's agents upon earth that Brother Hull would soon leave the Seventh-day Adventists and join their ranks, and the Spiritualist medium with whom he discussed must be all gentleness, and charm him and fascinate him. He was almost continually in the company of this Spiritualist medium, and Satan exulted at the conquest he had made."—Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White, "The Progressive Years"* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1986), vol. 2, p. 56.

Discuss the advice Jesus gave when His disciples returned with reports of soul-winning success and how the devils were subject to them. Luke 10:17-20.

Have you been attracted to some new religious fad or sensation?

Are you easily swayed by the charm of someone supposedly preaching truth? How do you test what is being said?

Is Jesus warning against joy or against pride and overconfidence?

ZEAL WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE (Matt. 23:15; Rom. 10:1-3).

Another device Satan can use to undermine the gospel and especially the Advent message is pushing a person's zeal to extreme lengths. S. S. Davis, a conference evangelist, was impressed with the enthusiasm of Pentecostal Christians. "They have the spirit," he said, "and we have the truth. If we could combine the two, the truth would go with power."

Soon after, Davis was using all sorts of musical instruments in his meetings, including a bass drum, to heighten the emotional effect of his message. The people shouted, prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and when falling prostrate, were surrounded by more singing and shouting. Those who fainted and revived were said to have passed through the "garden experience" and were "born" sons and daughters of God. They were ready for translation, for now they could no longer sin.

Furthermore, those who did not have this experience were only "adopted" children of God. They would have to die and go to heaven through the "underground railroad."

The General Conference stepped in to correct the situation. Ellen White pointed out that as long as we are on this earth, "holy flesh" is an impossibility. We can have holy hearts but not holy flesh. To believe otherwise would lead to overconfidence and play directly into the hands of the devil. (See *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, R. W. Schwartz [Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Publishing Association, 1979], pp. 447, 448.)

Compare the above experience with what Jesus said to the Pharisees. Matt. 23:15; see also Rom. 10:1-3.

Jesus chided the Pharisees, because the converts they were making were twice the children of the devil than they were. The "most converted became the most perverted," as someone said, being even more legalistic than the Pharisees themselves. The sin of the Pharisees was that they were bringing people to Judaism rather than to God.

While the concerns of the Pharisees and Elder Davis were different, there is a similarity. The Pharisees focused on obedience in order to obtain merit, an objective legalism. Davis focused on being acceptable to God by achieving a level of sinless perfection, a subjective legalism. Both approaches show a zeal based on unsound biblical knowledge.

Christians can be easily misled by religious fervor. But they also can be so legalistic they stifle the spirit of love. How do we strike a balance between the two? How are the scales tipping in your own life?

MISGUIDED INTELLIGENCE (Isa. 28:23-29; Jer. 9:23, 24; James 4:13-16).

In addition to charm and misguided zeal, another method Satan uses to undermine the gospel is to make intelligence and health the focus of people's attention. One of the most successful Adventist physicians was Dr. John Harvey Kellogg. It took him only about 20 years to turn the Western Health Reform Institute in 1876 into the internationally respected Battle Creek sanitarium with a staff of nearly 1,000.

Formulate the biblical principle that should guide all Christian professionals. Isa. 28:23-29; Jer. 9:23, 24; James 4:13-16.

Kellogg was quite generous and a man of prayer. Before each operation, he would pray with his surgical team. He gave all his fees either to the Sanitarium or to other Adventist institutions. Often he would perform surgery on charity patients without charge.

Over the years, however, Kellogg became so enamored with the healing, restorative power of the human body he began to believe that God was inside of every person. Indeed, he believed God was inside *every* living thing. God, he said, was not behind nature nor above nature. He was *in* nature, entering into our bodies every time we ate food. These beliefs began to border on spiritualism. W. A. Spicer, who had served in India, recognized in Kellogg's statements aspects of Hinduism. By 1907, the church in Battle Creek discontinued his membership.

One New York journalist, who had visited Kellogg, published this report: "While Dr. Kellogg and his household have lived in conformity with the most unworldly religious view, he has faced existence with no narrow outlook. And thus he has outgrown the anthropomorphic conception of God. 'My God,' he says simply today, 'is the personal, but universal intelligence that pervades the heights and the depths and the farthest reaches of the universe. . . .'" —Mabel Potter Daggett, *Delineator*, December 1910, p. 530.

What happens to our view of God when we equate Him with nature? Through the teachings of pantheism, how has Satan undermined what Christ has done for us?

If God is inside each of us, do we need to be born again? Do you know someone who believes that way? How do you share your faith with that person?

THE NEW AGE (Gen. 3:1-5; Matt. 7:21-23; Ps. 103:1-5; 149:1-4; 3 John 2).

Satan has launched his attack against God and Scripture by bringing to bear all methods he ever used on the generation living before the second coming of Christ. The words *New Age* describe a philosophy that includes a spectrum of beliefs from pantheism to reincarnation to moral relativism and therapeutic touch.

Therapeutic touch is the modern name for the ancient practice of laying-on of hands for healing. The National League of Nurses in the United States has approved this method as alternative care. It is practiced by thousands of nurses in over sixty-five countries. The basic concept is that energy, or *vital force*, is transferred by conscious intent from a healthy person to a patient in order to facilitate healing. Some in the medical profession who have studied this technique have taken a greater interest in the more pleasing forms of spiritualism and the power of the paranormal. The National Council Against Health Fraud, headquartered in Loma Linda, California, has strong reservations concerning this kind of alternative medicine. (See Sharon Fish, "The Therapeutic Touch," *Christian Research Journal* [Summer 1995], pp. 30-38).

Which texts help you with which New Age belief?

- A. Pantheism: you find God by finding yourself, for God is inside of you. _____ Matt. 7:21-23
- B. Reincarnation: you never die and are repeatedly reborn to carve out your own destiny. _____ Gen. 3:4
- C. Moral relativism: you determine your own morals and what is good for you; nothing is absolutely right or wrong. _____ Ps. 103:1-5
- D. Therapeutic touch: you can be healed by tapping the energy source within yourself and others. _____ Gen. 3:5

How can you apply the following caution to your life? "The apostles of nearly all forms of spiritism claim to have the power to cure the diseased. They attribute their power to electricity, magnetism, the so-called 'sympathetic remedies,' or to the latent forces within the mind of man. And there are not a few, even in this Christian age, who go to these healers, instead of trusting in the power of the living God and the skill of well-qualified Christian physicians."—*Evangelism*, p. 606.

FURTHER STUDY: The controversy between Christ and Satan has always centered on the question, Can God be trusted? While still in the Garden of Eden, Satan engaged Eve in a discussion over the reliability of God's Word (Gen. 3:1-5). He succeeded in causing her to doubt it. Yet it is God's trustworthiness that is the "rock" on which His covenant promise is built. He does not lie (Heb. 6:13-20).

We find this same trustworthiness in Scripture, for it is through Scripture that God speaks to us. Jesus never doubted what Scripture said (Matt. 19:4-6). He used it in defense against Satan (Matt. 4:1-11). Paul believed that Christ died, was buried, and rose according to Scripture (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Peter says that the Scriptures are more reliable than eyesight (2 Pet. 1:16-21). Lastly, John warns us not to add or subtract from the book he wrote (Rev. 22:18, 19).

"Christ illustrated character building by a house built on a rock. . . . Amidst the changing scenes, with heresy and false doctrines coming in that will test the faith of all, the house built on the solid rock cannot be shaken. . . .

"Let us take heed, then how we build. Let no one build unwisely. The word of God is our only foundation. Every semblance of error will come upon us. Some of these errors will be very specious and attractive, but if received, they would remove the pillars of the foundation that Christ has established and set up a structure of man's building. . . .

"Christ's lessons should be studied by everyone. The truth is solid, substantial. This truth is to be presented to all; for Satan will come in with his pleasing sentiments, which make nothingness of God's word and turn aside minds from the truth to fables."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 87.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. After studying this week's lesson, how would you answer the Key Question in Sabbath's introduction? Use specific examples presented throughout each day.
2. How is Scripture a "lamp" and a protection against sin? Ps. 119:9-16, 97-112.
3. Explain the verse, "My word shall not return to me void." Isa. 55:10, 11.

SUMMARY: Satan has succeeded in undermining Scripture through a mixture of tradition, Pentecostalism, communication with spirits, zeal for God, human intelligence, and "whatever works." These he then overlays with Scripture so that they seem to become more sure than the word of God itself. Thus it is necessary for us to make Scripture the basis of our faith.



The Teacher Had Something to Learn—4

Becky Mercill

Now that Natana had returned to take over leadership of the church, Samson turned his attention to the children. He saw an entire generation of children growing up robbed of an education, much as he had grown up years earlier. He was determined to see that these children would receive an education. Samson asked and received permission from the army to open primary schools for the children of South Sudan. But he had no school supplies to open schools.

Samson sent three men to Juba to ask aid agencies for supplies to help set up the schools. The agencies provided notebooks, chalk, pencils, and writing pads, but the men had no means to transport the supplies back to the village. They had to walk back to the village, and could take only what they could carry on their heads. But with these first supplies Samson started two primary schools that opened with 17 teachers and 721 pupils!

With the army's permission Samson walked from village to village in the region urging chiefs to establish primary schools in their towns so that more children could obtain an education. He told the people what they needed to do to start a school and urged them to move ahead. In three months Samson had helped start 34 schools that eventually hired 611 teachers.

The following year the Adventist church asked Samson to organize Adventist self-help (self-supporting) primary schools in South Sudan. In 1993 Samson opened the first Adventist self-help school in South Sudan with four teachers and 52 students in grades one and two. He continues working with community leaders and church members to establish Adventist self-help schools today.

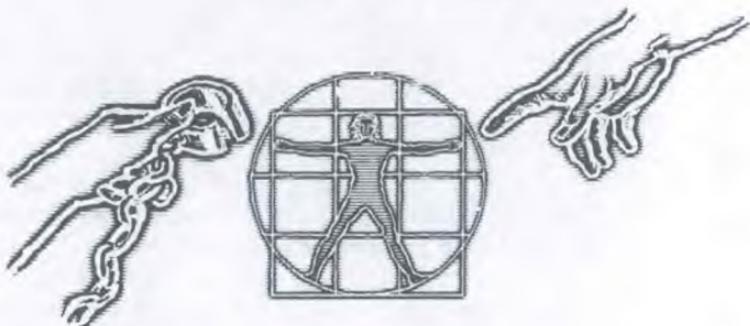
ADRA supplies some school materials and sponsors teacher training programs to upgrade the quality of instruction. Often the Adventist school is the only school for miles around; and most of the students who attend are not from Adventist families. At the end of 1996, 12 Adventist-sponsored self-help schools were serving 1700 students.

One of the greatest challenges is finding trained teachers who possess the leadership qualities needed to teach with limited supplies.

Samson set out to teach the Adventists a lesson. Instead he met the Saviour and has learned a lot more than he ever thought he could. And for that he gives God the glory.

Suleman Samson works with Global Mission in South Sudan. Becky Mercill wrote this while working with ADRA/South Sudan.

The Last Fight for Human Freedom



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Cor. 11:14, 15; Rev. 12:17; 13:11-15; 22:12-14.

MEMORY TEXT: “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38, 39, NKJV).

KEY QUESTIONS: What will Satan's last efforts consist of? What basic human needs will he appeal to? And exactly how will he try to accomplish his goals?

TURMOIL IN THE LAST DAYS. We must not forget that we are nearing the end of time when each follower of Christ will be tested to see whose side he or she is on. But we must not become so preoccupied with this testing time that we lose sight of Jesus.

The issue in the great controversy is the Lordship of Christ and the loyalty of those who claim to love Him. But we do not have the resources within ourselves to stand up to all the pressures that will be brought to bear on us. Even our own faith will not sustain us. Such help is ours only if we grasp the Saviour's hand, which He readily offers us. He alone is the object of our faith and the author and finisher of it (Heb. 12:1, 2). Thus we look beyond ourselves, not within ourselves, for victory. We look to the true Source of moral strength and steadfast faith. He is the One who will present us faultless before the Father.

PERSONATIONS (1 Sam. 27:11-14; 2 Cor. 11:14).

As we studied earlier, Satan produced the appearance of Samuel at the request of the witch of Endor. He is able to impersonate just as easily the form of Samuel as that of an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14).

"Little by little he [Satan] has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last moment of time . . . Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 561, 562.

Beside the personations given below, what other kinds of personations might Satan assume? Where else could he appear (see 2 Cor. 11:14 and Rev. 16:14)?

We should anticipate four kinds of personations:

1. *Loved Ones.* "It is Satan's most successful and fascinating delusion . . . Evil angels come in the form of those loved ones and relate incidents connected with their lives, and perform acts which they performed while living."—*Last Day Events*, p. 161.

2. *Saints or Sinners.* "It is not difficult for the evil angels to represent both saints and sinners who have died. . . . These manifestations will be more frequent, and developments of a more startling character will appear as we near the close of time."—*Evangelism*, p. 604.

3. *Apostles.* "The apostles, as personated by these lying spirits, are made to contradict what they wrote at the dictation of the Holy Spirit when on earth."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 557.

4. *Christ.* "As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. . . . In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. . . . The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: 'Christ has come! Christ has come!' The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him. . . . In gentle, compassionate tones . . . he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 624.

How would you respond to Satan's personations of a loved one?

How would you explain the personation of Christ by Satan to your neighbors?

VISIONS AND APPARITIONS (Deut. 13:1-5; Rev. 12:1-5).

Apparitions are somewhat different from personations. They are communications and manifestations of dead persons in an unusual way such as a voice speaking through a bright light or the statue of a saint shedding tears or oozing blood from its hands or feet. These kinds of apparitions have become more frequent, particularly among Christians, and are preparing the way for people to accept the workings of modern spiritualism.

Some Christians believe that "through the current deluge of apparitions and locutions, . . . we are witnessing the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven and true beacon for all Christians. It is now part of God's plan to have the 'Woman Clothed with the Sun' (Rev. 12:1) appear throughout the world, to offer people a safe haven in her Immaculate Heart."—Ted and Maureen Flynn, *The Thunder of Justice* (Sterling, Va.: Maxkol Communications, 1993), pp. 4, 5.

Compare Revelation 12:1-5 with verses 6-17. Explain the meaning of these texts in light of the quote given above.

What are the reasons for these apparitions of Mary? The Flynns say the central point of many of these warnings is to prepare people for the second coming of Christ and to stress that at the core of our problems is the breaking of the Sabbath (Sunday) commandment. In the Old Testament it was God's intention for the seventh-day Sabbath to be a day of rest and worship, teaching and praise. But the Flynns believe that in the New Testament, the day do to so is the Christian Sabbath, or Sunday. They state that to be ready for Christ's return, people must stop abusing this day. (See Ted and Maureen Flynn, *The Thunder of Justice*, pp. 4, 389.)

Discuss how Deuteronomy 13:1-5 applies to the above statement.

If the apparitions of Mary become more frequent and begin to influence someone you know, how would you share with that person the biblical evidence that Mary is resting in the grave and that these apparitions are from another source?

How would you explain from the Bible that the seventh-day Sabbath has not changed, why it is just as important now as it was in the Old Testament, and that it will continue to be so for all peoples in all places?

WORLD UNITY (Rev. 13:1-18; 18:1-24).

Match the following items to the texts:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. Rev. 13:1, 2 | <input type="text"/> A. The United States/Protestantism |
| 2. Rev. 13:11 | <input type="text"/> B. Satan |
| 3. Rev. 12:7 | <input type="text"/> C. Spiritualism |
| 4. Rev. 13:14 | <input type="text"/> D. The papal institution |
| 5. Rev. 16:13 | <input type="text"/> E. World unity |

The beast in Revelation 13:1, 2 represents the papal institution. The beast in verse 11 represents the United States/Protestantism. The dragon represents Satan (Rev. 12:9), who is determined to unite the world (Rev. 13:14) and bring it under his control through spiritualism (Rev. 16:13). (See the *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 816-824.)

Explain how Revelation 17:1-6 and 13:1, 2 relate to each other.

Commenting on Revelation 17:1-6, Dave Hunt writes, “The most significant event in nearly 500 years of church history was revealed as a *fait accompli* on March 29, 1994. On that day leading American evangelicals and Catholics signed a joint declaration titled ‘Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the 3rd Millennium.’ The document, in effect, overturned the Reformation and will unquestionably have far-reaching repercussions throughout the Christian world for years to come.”—Dave Hunt, *A Woman Rides the Beast* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1994), p. 5.

Read about this woman and the beast in Revelation 18:1-4, 11-19; 14:8; 16:19; 13:16, 17.

Ancient Babylon symbolizes global unity. This symbolic city is ruled by spiritualism, Catholicism, and political Protestantism. The glue holding these parts together is a global economy dedicated to unity and world peace (Rev. 18:11-19).

How will you respond when economic restrictions are placed on those who persist in keeping the commandments of God, including the seventh-day Sabbath? What can you do now to increase your faith and decrease your attachment to things of the world? How can returning our tithes and offerings prepare us emotionally for what is coming?

LAW AND ORDER (Rom. 13:1-7; Rev. 13:15; Dan. 3:13-18; 1 Pet. 2:13-17).

Compare what Paul said in Romans 13:1-7 with what Peter said in Acts 4:19, 20; 5:29; 1 Peter 2:13-17; 4:15, 16.

In Romans 13:1-7, Paul calls the state “God’s servant” meaning that it has the responsibility to command those citizens who do good and punish those who break the law. But its responsibility and laws should not extend to the spiritual realm.

When Peter and John were arrested after the Sanhedrin instructed them not to teach in the name of Jesus, Peter defended their actions by saying, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19, NKJV). They then continued their work. When the chief elders summoned them a second time to ask them why they disobeyed their orders, Peter said, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29, NKJV). Likewise, we should be law abiding citizens as long as a law does not go against one of God’s commands (James 2:10, 11).

Explain how the experience recorded in Daniel 3:13-18 fits into the last days.

The Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint) used in Jesus’ day does not have the word *if* in verse 17 as does the Hebrew text, which contains the whole statement (vv. 16-18) as a declarative statement: “O king, we have no need to answer thee concerning this command. For God in the heavens is our one Lord, whom we fear, and who is able to deliver us out of the furnace of fire; and out of your hands, O king, he will deliver us; and then it shall be manifest to thee that we will serve neither thy idol, nor worship thy golden image.” (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 784.)

Compare the events of Daniel 3:1-25 with what will happen to God’s people in the time of the end. Does verse 25 imply that we will escape unharmed? Explain your answer.

Why do you think the three Hebrews were strong enough to disobey the king’s command? Based on verse 25, what hope of victory and deliverance do we have?

THE FINAL DECEPTION (Matt. 24:23-27).

In Matthew 24:23-27, Jesus encompassed all of Satan's deceptions to the end of time. People will be invited to isolated places and secret rooms to listen to and communicate with false teachers and christs. With prophetic insight into the future, Jesus knew that Satan would personate His second coming. He also knew that Satan would deceive, if he could, the very elect (Matt. 24:24).

Compare Satan's attempt to counterfeit Christ's second coming with what Jesus said about His return. Matt. 24:25-27; 1 Thess. 4:16-18; Rev. 1:7.

Christ will come for *all* to see, even those who were responsible for his death such as Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and members of the Sanhedrin who pronounced Him guilty. Yet, not only will they mourn, but "all peoples of the earth" will eventually mourn as well.

Explain the close of probation in light of Revelation 22:7-17. When will it take place?

How does the context of these verses define "righteous" and "holy," on the one hand and "unjust" and "filthy" on the other?

In verse 17, the Holy Spirit is making one last appeal to people everywhere to accept Jesus as their Saviour. There will come a time when probation will close and the moral character of each human will be forever fixed. Now human nature can still be changed. The effects of sin are still reversible, but once probation closes, a person's basic human nature, be it good or bad, will remain as it is.

How would you answer the questions posed by the following passage quoted from *The Great Controversy*?

"Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His Word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only?"—*The Great Controversy*, p. 625.

How would you apply the questions from the above passage to your daily Christian experience? What would help you become more established in God and His Word in these last days?

FURTHER STUDY: Read the glorious outcome of our destiny if we remain faithful to Christ in Revelation 19–22.

Read any or all of the following: *Prophets and Kings*, “The Fiery Furnace,” pp. 503–513; *The Acts of the Apostles*, “At the Temple Gate,” pp. 57–69; *The Great Controversy*, “The Controversy Ended,” pp. 662–678.

“In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called ‘a country.’ Hebrews 11:14–16. There the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations. There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God’s people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 675.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. After studying this week’s lesson, how would you answer the Key Questions in Sabbath’s introduction?
2. What *fires* of daily life are people *thrown* into today? How can God help us walk through these *fires* so that when the time of the end comes, He will be our Companion and Guide?

SUMMARY: Satan’s last efforts to make void the gospel and take away human freedom will revolve around spiritualism, economics, and persecution. He will focus on such basic aspects of human nature as our spiritual interests, monetary needs, safety, and security. To accomplish his ends, he will personate Christ, influence lawmakers to enact laws that will withdraw the privileges of liberty from those who keep God’s commandments, and influence governments to reserve buying and selling only for those who conform to worldly standards.

But God will rescue His people. Then there will be a new heaven and a new earth, populated with recreated people. God’s original purpose in creating the earth will be fulfilled. It will become the home of the redeemed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. One reminder alone will remain: Jesus will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. As eternity rolls on, the redeemed will comprehend more and more the love of God as seen in their Saviour and Lord.



The Neglectful Adventist

J. H. Zachary

The pastor asked his church members in Sucavita, Romania, to support the upcoming evangelistic meetings by praying and inviting their friends. One man, Mircea Gainescu, agreed to invite some friends, but during the week he became busy with work and other activities and forgot his promise.

His pastor asked a second time, but the pressures of family and work crowded the promise from his mind, and the week slipped by before he remembered to invite someone.

On Friday night Brother Gainescu had a dream. He seemed to be looking toward the gate that led from his front door to the street. As he looked, a stranger approached the gate. Gainescu noted that he was short and thin with curly hair. The stranger stopped and asked Gainescu if he could go to church with him.

Gainescu woke up and remembered his promise to invite people to the meetings. He prayed that it was not too late to keep his promise.

Shortly after daybreak he looked out his window toward the front gate. To his surprise he saw a stranger standing at the gate. He was short and thin with curly hair. Gainescu recognized him as the man he had seen in his dream.

Mircea hurried to the gate and welcomed the man into his home. The stranger asked him, "I want to understand the Bible. May I go to church with you today?"

Mircea whispered a thank-You prayer to God and told the man about the evangelistic meetings. This man faithfully attended the remaining meetings. He was thrilled with the messages and accepted each new truth with joy. Following Bible studies he was baptized.

After his baptism he invited his neighbors to come to his home to study the Bible. Some 40 persons accepted his invitation and came to his studies. Only God knows the final outcome of this man's conversion, but Mircea thanks God that He cares about one soul enough to send a dream to a neglectful Adventist to remind him to invite someone to church.

Is God reminding you to invite someone? Does He have to send a dream before you will remember?

J. H. Zachary is international evangelism coordinator for The Quiet Hour in Redlands, California.

Study Guide for Third Quarter, 1999

The third quarter Bible Study Guide, entitled "*God's Creation: Looking at the Biblical Account*," studies the role of our Creator-God in the origins of life from the viewpoint of Scripture.

Lesson 1: God the Creator.

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Gen. 1-2; John 1:1-18; 14:16-28.

MEMORY TEXT: Genesis 1:1, NKJV.

KEY THOUGHT: The divine unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are reflected in Creation.

OUTLINE:

God Is One (Gen. 1:1-2; Deut. 6:4; John 1:1-3).

Equal Yet Distinct (John 1:1-18; 14:16-28; 16:5-16).

United Yet Distinct (Gen. 1:26, 27; 3:22; Mal. 2:10; John 14:10).

Beginning, Middle, and End of Creation (Rev. 1:8).

Scripture and the Past, Present, and Future (2 Pet. 3:5-7).

Lesson 2: God's Two Books: Scripture and Nature.

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 1:20; 2:14, 15; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Ps. 19; 33:4-9.

MEMORY TEXT: Psalm 33:4, NKJV.

KEY THOUGHT: God communes with fallen humanity through Scripture and His works in nature.

OUTLINE:

The Book of Nature (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20; 2:14, 15).

The Book of Scripture (Ps. 19:7-11; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21).

The Harmony of Nature and Scripture (John 1:1-5; Ps. 33:4).

Contradiction of Nature and Scripture? (2 Pet. 3:3-13).

Rational and Faithful (Rom. 1:16-21; 1 Pet. 3:15).

Lessons in Braille

The regular adult Bible Study Guides are available free each month in Braille and 16 2/3 rpm records to blind and physically handicapped persons who cannot read normal ink print. This includes individuals who because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accident, old age, and so forth cannot hold or focus on normal ink-print publications. Contact the Christian Record Services, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506.

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Believe
in
Miracles?*



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