

# Hope and Healing Bible Studies

## **Facilitator's Guide**

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## How To Use The Facilitator's Guide

### General remarks

Welcome to Hope and Healing Bible Studies, which are designed to inspire hope and to lead participants to the true source of physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual healing. In this regard, these studies are not, and should not be, used for religious debates. Their purpose is to foster a spirit of friendship that allows open, respectful sharing among people of similar or different religions or different Christian faiths. And for maximum benefit from these series, certain attitudes are required:

- Willingness to discover new knowledge.
- Willingness to share knowledge.
- Willingness to be guided by the Holy Spirit.
- Willingness to regard the Bible as the supreme authority and source of Christian principles, beliefs and practice.

The Personal Ministries Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that small discussion groups make learning participatory, engaging and interesting. Hence, we recommend strongly that these studies be undertaken by small groups at homes, workplaces, schools or in any other settings that allow reasonable sizes of groups. This does not, however, restrict those who want to study on a one-on-one basis or as individuals or even as large audiences.

There is a maximum of twenty-one lessons all in all. So studies can be spread over a period and frequency acceptable to any group or setting. In the event these lessons are required for daily group meetings that run for two or three weeks without a break, then there should be a topic selected for each day. The facilitators are free to select any topics from the twenty-one if the meetings are only meant to run for fourteen days or less.

We have tried by all means to give a psychological flow to the series. In other words, each topic is meant to set the stage for the next until all of them are covered. This is why it is most preferred to cover the whole twenty-one set of topics in the order in which they appear in the table of contents. It is normal for participants to want to skip and jump to hot topics, but the interconnectedness of ideas may be highly compromised should that be done. This is why a selection of fourteen or less topics still demands facilitators to come up with a psychological flow that minimizes distortions in the sequence of themes and ideas.

### Lesson structure:

- Topic: what the discussion is all about.
- Special Nugget: Bible quote upon which the key thought of a lesson is built.
- Main body: questions that each lesson answers.
- Hope and Healing Moment: the mindset we hope each participant will have after a study.

- What do you think about this study: the participants' evaluation of a lesson and their response to the personalized questionnaire provided at the end of each series.

### Collecting participants' questionnaire responses

As a Facilitator of these discussions, you should hand out questionnaires that are exactly the same as the ones that appear at the end of each lesson in the workbook. Request each participant to fill in the questionnaires and return them to you. However, those who are studying alone should complete the questionnaires in a website link or in an app that is provided upon registration for these studies. Participants who are going through guided discussions with you are also free to submit their responses in the same website link or app.

### How to facilitate Hope and Healing Bible Studies

We advise facilitators to run these Bible studies as discussions that go through the specified workbook as has been intimated. Each lesson in the workbook has blank spaces that need to be filled in in the course of study. So pens need to be made available for this exercise. However, the facilitator's guide has no blank spaces. Instead, it has red words where the workbook has blank spaces. These red words are the answers to the blank spaces. Please do not ask the participants to guess the answers that should be filled in. If the answers are from the Bible, let someone read the passage and then request the participants to fill in the blanks. You also need to supply the missing words that need to be filled in in the author's comments. Sometimes it is good for discussion purposes to let the audience try to answer some of the discussion questions before you give them the author's view. You may also give the author's view first and then ask for participants' feedback on what the author has said. Just give your lesson delivery a variety of approaches that stimulate discussion. Avoid at all cost giving long and dry lectures. No one will be interested in coming back for more studies. We further advise that, where possible, each participant should be in possession of a workbook, no matter how big the audience may be. The reason is that these studies are designed to make use of a workbook. If workbooks are not made available to participants, then the set up changes from study to preaching. This is not the intention, although it could be the last resort if workbooks are not available.

The most important issue with these lessons is not to rush to finish a study but to make participants understand so that they are able to explain new insights to their significant others. There is no sin in repeating a study if participants feel they need more clarity.

### Some guidelines that may make your Bible studies pleasurable moments:

- Prepare your mind and heart for each study. Read thoroughly and seek God's presence to go with you. Please read other sources outside the material prepared for these series.
- Have a balance between lecturing and discussions.

- Invite questions and comments from participants and let them provide answers before you come in with yours.
- You should also throw in your own questions, but make sure you have researched your answers very well.
- Flow with the thought-line of the author. Avoid teaching a totally different lesson than what is in the workbook.
- Create moments of special intercessory prayers, especially at the beginning or at the time when discussions focus on the Hope and Healing Moment. This will also give participants an opportunity to pray for their responses to the questionnaires.
- It would be great if refreshments can be organized. Make them simple and nice. However, if a group cannot afford refreshments, it is okay. The fellowship is just as good.
- Please avoid reading every sentence and every Bible text that appears in a lesson. Learn to summarize. Leave participants to read greater detail alone, outside of the discussion group.
- Finish a study while people are still enjoying it and it is also very important to stick to the times that your participants are happy with.
- Attend TOT sessions so you may be better equipped for this ministry.
- Enjoy evangelism and the participants will also catch your fire.

### The Great Commission and the Great Promise

MATTHEW 28: 19 AND 20

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have taught you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.*

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## Here Is What The Bible Says About Hope And Healing

### Special Nugget

ROMANS 4: 18 – 21

*Who (Abraham – inserted), contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken. “So shall your descendants be.” And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sara’s womb. He did not waiver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.*

### How is this discussion organized?

- We are discussing hope first, followed by healing.
- We are discussing both from the biblical point of view.
- However, the greater part of our discussion is on hope because hope is critical to mental and physical health.

This study sets the stage for all the series under Hope and Healing Bible Studies.

### What is the everyday usage of the word hope?

- Hope is wishing that something good (like, for example, healing) will happen.
- It may also be a wish that something bad (like failing an exam) won’t happen.
- So hope is a mental state that wishes for a certain outcome from an event or from a process. For instance, some people may hope to get married while others may hope that divorce won’t happen in spite of their marital challenges.
- There are many ways of explaining and illustrating the term hope other than what we have provided here.
- However, later in this discussion we explain how biblical hope goes beyond our human understanding of hope.

### How do we know that someone has lost hope?

JOHN 5: 1 – 7

*After this there was the feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there was in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five*

porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had been there in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming another steps down before me."

- This story is a classic example of a person who feels hopeless.
- The man has reached a point where redeeming his situation is inconceivable in his mind.
- The question "Do you want to be made well?" only invites his helpless reaction.
- However, he has genuine reasons for feeling this desperate:
  - ❖ He has been in his condition for thirty-eight years. That is a pretty long time to keep anticipating that things will get better given also the ferocious competition he faces from other able-bodied patients to get into the so called miracle pool.
  - ❖ His condition seems to be the worst case compared to other patients who are with him by the pool. No wonder Jesus picks him out from the rest.
  - ❖ The gentleman has no family members or friends or anyone to offer him help. He is fighting it all by himself. It seems his people are tired of him.
- The scenario above represents many of us, although the circumstances may be entirely different. However, feelings of hopelessness depend on how individuals interpret and choose to react to their situations. Some of the situations that really challenge us as human beings include, but are not limited to:
  - ❖ Divorce
  - ❖ Marital unfaithfulness
  - ❖ Death of a loved one
  - ❖ Debts that lead to loss of family (or personal) property
  - ❖ Terminal (or chronic) illness of self, a family member or of a close relative
  - ❖ Failure to be gainfully employed
  - ❖ Being academically challenged
  - ❖ Being physically challenged in terms of sight, hearing, speaking, limbs and so on.
  - ❖ Delinquent children or adolescents
  - ❖ Challenges of single-parenting
  - ❖ Cases of abuse, including rape
  - ❖ Destitution
  - ❖ Workplace victimization or loss of employment
  - ❖ Natural disasters including war
  - ❖ Business failure
  - ❖ Rejection by significant others

- ❖ Failing a critical academic or professional examination
- ❖ Etc.

## How does the Bible project the future of this world? Is there any hope for a better future?

MATTHEW 24: 3 – 8

*Now, as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" And Jesus answered and said to them, "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."*

Below is the depressing future Jesus sees, as recorded in the text above:

N. B: We have illustrated each observation so as to give a contemporary picture.

- The Christian church is infiltrated by some people purporting to be prophets when in actual fact they are taking advantage of people through deceptive claims and misleading miracles. Please see also Matthew 24: 24 and 2 Thessalonians 2: 9 and 10. When we face mounting social crises and natural disasters, there is tendency in people to fall back on higher powers for hope, hence our susceptibility to deception from individuals or groups who wish to enrich themselves from human misery by offering false religious hope.
- Political conflict and war is culture around the world. It is a major cause of death.
- Famine around some pockets of the world is a big challenge. Some of the famine is due to human action such as war and environmental mismanagement.
- Human health is facing serious challenges. For example, lifestyle conditions like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems, cancer and the like are becoming leading killer diseases.
- Natural disasters are also threatening human survival. Luke 21: 25 and 26 give extra detail on this issue.
- Secularism seem to be replacing the Bible as the dominant influence in society. We see that postmodernism is ushering in a post-religion era, especially in the West and we hope the world will be able to live with the social and moral implications of such an option. However, Jesus sees otherwise.
- The world is generally not getting any better. It is becoming less and less safe to live in.

## LUKE 21: 25 AND 26

*And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

- Again, Jesus sees dangers coming from outer space.
- There are also dangers from the sea – global warming is responsible for part of this crisis which is also blamed on human action (like industrialization and pollution).
- The survival on this planet is highly threatened as can be confirmed by numerous summits on climate change by the international community.
- We really don't know what life will be like on earth a few decades from now.

## 2 TIMOTHY 3: 1 – 5

*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of religion but denying its power...*

- Paul also sees the a problematic future and we have paraphrased it so we can see it through the lenses of today.
  - Self-centeredness is destroying the traditional idea of community. Generally, people want to be left alone. This is leading to the "It's My Life Syndrome". Some live for money at the expense of all other things, family and marriage included.
  - Family relationships are extremely difficult to manage. This can be confirmed by unprecedented cases of marital and family dysfunctions or brokenness.
  - Some of the fundamental biblical principles that define human conduct are being questioned and/or rejected in some countries. Human rights and not the Bible is becoming the basis for decision making on social matters and is enforced by law. This does not suggest that it is wrong to have human rights, but it is always a challenge when God's moral code is subject to what human rights say.
  - There is less and less respect for human life as murders (including mass killings) continue relentlessly.
  - Pleasure seeking seems to be the new religion. God is being thrown out the window; so is commitment and faithfulness to spouses and children in the name of having good times (fun).
  - Transformational spirituality that leaves believers reflecting the character of Jesus is facing challenges from some religious leaders. In some extreme cases, church has become a marketplace where some entrepreneurs who are smart at disguising themselves as prophets, apostles, evangelists or pastors come to meet unsuspecting customers (church

members). This is now a serious moral and ethical crisis crying for attention in some countries. See also 1 Corinthians 11: 13.

- It appears that all the continents are going through some unprecedented crises. And each has its own unique share of problems. We are gradually but surely being driven to a hopeless point, no matter where we find ourselves. And many people are now searching for hope outside of marriages, families, love affairs, jobs, business, politics, religion... and the list goes on and on.
  - Some have already reached the point that the gentleman by the pool of Bethesda reached: "I have no one to help me". Others already know that they will soon get to that point too.
  - Some are overtaken by events. In the flash of a moment, the unthinkable happens and their lives get downgraded to nothing.
  - It is a growing realization that other people's (spouses, parents, children, relatives, friends, lovers, business captains, employers, employees, customers, philosophers, psychologists, politicians, religious leaders and so on) contribution to our sense of meaning and inner peace leave a void that nothing human can ever fill. Here are a few thought provoking questions:
    - ❖ Why would a couple with all the money we can think of lead a miserable life?
    - ❖ Why should a wife get raped and murdered in front of her husband?
    - ❖ Why should a great entertainer commit suicide?
  - Global distress is slowly getting to a saturation point as the Bible predicts. Is it not true that world events seem to be confirming biblical prophecy today more than at any time in history? Those who will make it into the future will most likely be living totally different lives from today. The Bible says it will be worse for them than it is for us today. Unfortunately, that future may not be very far off, considering current crises in various places.

## Who and what then is our hope in a shockingly unpredictable world like ours?

### JOHN 5: 6-8

*When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had been there in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well...*

- Hope is a person from the biblical point of view. And that person is Christ.
- When we have lost all hope, He is still our hope. Sometimes we don't have to have any hope. The gentleman in John 5 did not have any hope of getting healed. But unbeknown to himself, Christ became his only hope. And all those who know Christ can afford hope against hope. He is the reason to hope.
- Christ can change our impossible situations at will. He is unlimited.

- He may take a long time to address our individual situations but, when He does, we will all agree that something outside of humanity has done it.
- Hope is beyond what we wish or desire. Hope is Christ, as stated earlier. He knows how to deal with our desperate situations. He does not depend on our perceptions or conceptions of solutions.
- This is why Abraham could hope when there was no reason to hope because he made the Creator his hope (Romans 4: 18 – 21 and Genesis 18: 14).
- Hope is surrendering matters into God's hands in spite of how our challenges present themselves and being at home in our minds after doing so.
- So biblical hope is not primarily based on our wishes and circumstances. It is based on placing unreserved trust in God and letting Him take care of business.
- Sometimes He turns our greatest disappointments into our greatest opportunities and breakthroughs (think of the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50). God can also choose to frustrate our finite hope so that we may experience His infinite hope.

### What is healing?

JOHN 5: 14

*Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."*

- Since some of us are not medical doctors, just allow us to give our own version of what we think healing and cure are. We may not be medically correct. Never mind. We just want to illustrate a practical point.
- We would like to think that the gentleman found by Jesus by the pool of Bethesda received cure (treatment or removal of whatever condition he was suffering from), but he was not healed at that point. This sounds funny, but it is true.
- Healing is what Jesus recommended to this gentleman when He met him in the temple. He said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you" (John 5: 14). Jesus challenged him to remove the root causes that led to his cured condition. If the causes are not addressed satisfactorily, the condition will return more viciously than its previous extent.
- So health is not best managed by a constant search for treatments to remove or reverse symptoms. We need to adopt a lifestyle that removes the causes of diseases. This is what we call true healing in this discussion and it applies to social, financial and spiritual matters as well.

### What are the major domains that need to be properly managed so that all other health and wellness aspects get a chance of working for our good?

- Physical health: maintaining the body on the basis of knowing how it is structured and how its various parts work, including meeting all the requirements for its optimal functioning such as exercise, nutrients and the like.
- Mental health: possessing the following abilities for personal development: ability to think, to perceive issues correctly, to create ideas, to solve problems, to produce and share knowledge, to have emotional intelligence and so on.
- Spiritual health: to relate with higher powers – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – as the primary source of our hope, resilience and moral conscience (as some of us believe).

Through the above stated domains, we can interact with our social and spiritual worlds productively and also be able to address financial health including all other aspects that relate to human health and wellness.

### Hope and Healing Moment

2 CORINTHIANS 12: 8 – 10

*Concerning this thing, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

- God always has reasons for saying no to our prayers or wishes.
- When He says, "No," it does not mean that He has forsaken us.
- He may be wanting to reveal His power through our circumstances.
- At times, our disappointments give Him opportunities to shine through our lives.
- We need to "let go and let God". It is good for our mental health.
- Hope does not mean sitting back and doing nothing. We can, like Paul, do a great good even in our pain and disappointments. The world is coming to an end, but there is still a lot of good we can do to improve the quality of human life and our environment.
- Hope is trusting Christ with our challenges in spite of our fears.

1 PETER 5: 7

*Casting all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.*

REVELATION 22: 1 – 5

*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*

- Revelation 21: 1-5 marks the final destiny of believing in Christ – eternal restoration – and that is our blessed hope. Christ will give us eternal healing from sin and its consequences and we will live with Him forever and ever.

**What do you think about this study?**

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter’s interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I need to embrace real hope and real healing as found in Christ.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
- I need aided personal Bible studies.
- Help me with any resources that explain the discussed subject matter in detail.
- I need a personal visit for emotional and spiritual support.

**My contacts**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile/WhatsApp \_\_\_\_\_

Face Book \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Here Is What The Bible Says About Our Worth

### Special Nugget

PSALM 139: 14

*I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.*

### Where did we come from?

GENESIS 1: 26, 27

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

- The biblical position is that God the Creator is the One who invented human life.
- We are not a product of chance or accident.
- We are not the offspring of lower species (animals).

### What else makes our creation special?

PSALM 139: 15 - 17

*My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skilfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. How precious are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!*

- God sees each person before they are conceived.
- He is always there when human life is being developed during pregnancy.
- Human beings represent a highly engineered, complex design.
- The design is a product of supernatural intelligence.
- God has good will (good intentions) towards us all. See Jeremiah 29:11.

## What makes us different from other creatures on earth?

GENESIS 1: 26, 27

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

- Our thoughts, feelings and actions are meant to reflect those of God.
- God gave us stewardship and accountability over the earth and everything in it (environmental management).
- The responsibility over this planet runs across gender. We are all expected to manage our environment well.

ROMANS 13: 9 AND 10

*For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.*

- We are endowed with moral conscience (knowledge of good or evil).
- God is the One who reveals what is good or evil. See Micah 6: 8.

REVELATION 14: 7B

*...and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.*

- We are created to worship. No other species has this instinct.

2 PETER 1: 5 - 9

*But also for this reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control... For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- We have the potential for continual development in knowledge and other social traits.

PHILIPPIANS 4: 8

*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things.*

- We are ethical beings who should operate on the basis of what is right and fair.
- Our ethical standards should be driven by personal motivation and commitment.
- Integrity preserves all social sectors. Dishonesty undermines society.
- We should strive for excellence in everything that we do.

DEUTERONOMY 30: 19

*I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life...*

- God gave us the freedom of choice. This is one of those endowments that really make us human.

MATTHEW 25: 31 - 40

*Then the King will say to those on His right hand, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you and you came to Me." Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give you drink?" And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."*

- God gave us hearts that are capable of loving and caring.
- Therefore, we should also be seen practising social responsibility or acts of compassion to all people, irrespective of race, tribe, language, gender or any grouping whatsoever.

PHILIPPIANS 2: 3

*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

- Other-centeredness and humility are attributes of greatness and godlikeness.
- Self-centeredness and lack of humility cause much suffering on earth and we should avoid them at all cost.

## What relationship should exist between us and our Creator?

1 JOHN 3: 1

*Beloved what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!*

- The Creator is our primary Father.
- So true Christianity is expressed through this parent-child relationship (God being the Father and us being His children).

ROMANS 5:8

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

- As our Father, the Creator loves us in spite of ourselves.

## Hope and Healing Moment

1 PETER 5: 7

*Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

- Our Father knows our needs.
- Our future is in His hands. And there is no need to worry in spite of our valid concerns. He has more solutions for our challenges than we can imagine. What He wants from us is for us to trust and to obey Him.

## What do you think about this study?

### • Evaluation of the lesson

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

### • Knowledge appreciation

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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### • Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.

- \_\_\_\_\_
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### • Any special needs - Please tick all applicable:

- I need God to help me esteem myself.
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## HOPE AND HEALING BIBLE STUDIES - Day Two

### Here Is What The Bible Says About Human Nature

#### Special Nugget

ROMANS 7: 18

*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.*

#### What challenges do our nature have on us?

ROMANS 7: 15 – 21 AND 24

*For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practise; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

- Human behaviour is not easy to understand.
- We are inclined to behave against our will.
- Our nature is corrupted. It is no longer good.
- The natural inclination is to do evil or wrong.
- The underlying force responsible for all this is sin.
- We are chained to this weak nature and there is no human solution to it.

ROMANS 8: 7

*Because the carnal mind is enmity with God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*

- Human nature is at war with God.
- It cannot subject itself to His law.
- Even if it wants to obey, it can't.

## What are some of the behaviours that portray our fallen nature?

GALATIANS 5: 19 – 21

- Sexual problems of different types
- Human-made religions
- Bad attitudes
- Interpersonal challenges
- Crime
- Substance abuse

## What then is the sinful nature?

ROMANS 3: 23

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

ROMANS 5: 12

*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.*

- Our nature has lost its original sinless quality.
- Its weaknesses are passed on genetically. So human off-spring does not make a choice to be sinful. They are born so.
- We are under the inescapable law of death. See also Ecclesiastes 9: 5.

## What went wrong for us that we find ourselves with this kind of nature?

REVELATION 12: 7 – 9

*And war broke out in heaven: Michael (Christ – inserted) and His angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they could not prevail, nor was their place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

ISAIAH 14: 12 – 14

*How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground... For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High.'*

- A great angel (Lucifer, later called Satan) rebelled in heaven against God's authority and office.
- He deceived some angels in his rebellion.

- Both he and the angels that rebelled with him were cast out of heaven and made earth their place of habitation.

GENESIS 2: 15 – 17

*Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not, for in the day you eat of it you shall surely die."*

GENESIS 3: 4 – 6

*Then the serpent (Satan – inserted. See Revelation 12: 7 – 9) said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.*

- Satan managed to deceive the original couple on earth into disobeying their Creator, and he continues to do so with all of us to this day.
- He suggested what appeared to Eve to be the sweet benefits of disobeying God. But he knew what his goal was: to destroy trust in God and make himself the god of the human race on earth.

ROMANS 5: 12

*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.*

- Since Adam's fall, the whole human race have lived with the consequences of disobeying God's commandments.
- Adam's perfect nature became sinful, and so are we, his descendants, to this day.

## Hope and Healing Moment

ROMANS 8: 3 AND 4

*For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

- Christ is the solution to the challenges associated with our sinful nature.
- We can't obey God's law on our own.
- So Christ came to conquer this evil nature through the Holy Spirit.

- It's now very possible to obey God because the Holy Spirit can do that on our behalf.
- Please see John 4:1-42, and Luke 19:1-10 and similar stories that show the power of God over sin. That power is also available to all of us today.

### What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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## Here Is What The Bible Says About Sin

### Special Nugget

1 JOHN 3: 4

*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.*

### What attitude drives lawlessness

ISAIAH 14: 12 – 14

*How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground... For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High."*

EZEKIEL 28: 17

*Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendour...*

- Selfishness is one issue that summarizes all that which the Bible calls sin.
- It is the reason why people disrespect parents, commit murders, defy sexual boundaries, steal, lie and covet other people's things.
- Selfishness is the attitude that dethrones God in our minds and makes us behave like we are the bosses of our lives (the "It's my life" syndrome).
- Lucifer allowed "self" to get the better of him. He literally succumbed to self-worship.

### In what state were Adam, Eve and Lucifer created?

GENESIS 2: 26, 27 AND 31

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good...*

- Adam and Eve were created perfect.
- They were sinless.

EZEKIEL 28: 12B, 14 AND 15

*Thus the Lord God: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I establish you; you were on the*

- **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I need God to help me fulfil my spiritual needs.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
- I need aided personal Bible studies.
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*holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you."*

- Lucifer was created perfect.
- He had no trace of sin in him.

### What made Adam, Eve and Lucifer sin?

DEUTERONOMY 30: 19

*I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life...*

- They chose to sin.
- The greatest gift ever given to intelligent beings is the freedom of choice.
- Without this freedom, human beings and angels would just be robots with no choice but to obey.
- So these three (Adam, Eve and Lucifer) used their freedom of choice to disobey and to rebel against God.
- Therefore, being created perfect does not mean being in a state in which it is impossible to sin.
- Jesus lived a perfect life, but this does not mean He could not have sinned if He had wanted to (see Hebrews 2:18). The word *tempted* used in Hebrews 2:18 and Matthew 4:1 only makes sense when the possibility to fall to a temptation is present.
- So it makes no sense to blame God for instituting laws that govern His created works. Which parent would have a home without rules? Therefore, we should learn to blame our own choices, which often lead us into trouble (sin).

### Is sin still a challenge irrespective of whether you go to church or not?

1 JOHN 1: 8

*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

- Sin remains a challenge among all human beings, regardless of any religious status.
- It is a life struggle this side of heaven.
- Even Bible writers themselves battled with it.

### Can we overcome sin in our imperfect nature?

ROMANS 8: 3 AND 4

*For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the*

*flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

2 PETER 3: 18

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...*

- Jesus gives us victory over sin.
- But His victory does not take away all sinful tendencies overnight.
- His victory in us is best understood in terms of how humans grow from childhood. You continue to face developmental challenges (failures, setbacks, sickness and so on) as you grow, but that does not mean you are not growing. Please see 1 Corinthians 13: 11).
- The greatest victory, though, is to be given by God a mindset that hates sin. Feelings of guilt and remorse are pivotal to social, moral and spiritual growth. Some of us may not feel guilt or remorse, but it should just be second nature to hate doing wrong things.
- It is easier to conquer something that you hate than something you still treasure. Sin is bad. Let us hate it with a passion..

### Hope and Healing Moment

GALATIANS 2: 20

*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

- The best way to overcome sin is to let go and let Christ.

## What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

- \_\_\_\_\_  
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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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- **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I need God to deliver me from a life controlled by sin.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
- I need aided personal Bible studies.
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## Here Is What The Bible Says About Our Salvation

### Special Nugget

EPHESIANS 2: 8 – 10

*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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

### What tragedy did sin bring to humankind?

ROMANS 6: 23A

*For the wages of sin is death...*

REVELATION 20: 13 – 15

*The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire.*

- Sin destroys.
- Its destructive nature is best illustrated by what the book of Revelation calls the second death – meaning, to be erased from existence forever. This judgment is carried out through hell fire.

DANIEL 12: 2

*Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and others to everlasting contempt.*

- The ordinary death people experience through accidents, murders, sickness and so on is called a sleep. So, whether our works were good or bad, we will all resurrect to face our eternal reward.
- The everlasting contempt in Daniel 12: 2 is what Revelation 20 refers to as the second death – eternal death.

## So, what is God's solution to our sin problem?

JOHN 3: 16

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish (experience the second death – inserted) but have eternal life.*

See also Romans 5: 8 and Isaiah 53.

- We were all supposed to be destroyed forever because of sin.
- But Jesus took that punishment upon Himself. He chose to die the everlasting death on the Cross on our behalf. If God had not resurrected Him, He would still be dead, now and forever. That was the price Jesus paid for our salvation.
- This is why He is referred to as our Saviour – Matthew 1: 18.

JOHN 5: 28 AND 29

*Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

- So, anyone who accepts Christ as her personal Saviour will not die the second death, but will resurrect to live forever and ever.

### One may ask: What must I do to earn salvation or everlasting life?

EPHESIANS 2: 8 – 10

*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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

- Everything that is required for our salvation is done by God for us.
- Grace means receiving something we don't deserve and something we don't need to pay for in order to receive it. It is unconditionally given without us doing anything.
- Faith is the positive response to God's grace. It is our way of reaching out to receive God's salvation. Please note: faith, too, is a gift from God. It is not ours. "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).
- Good works are the product of grace and faith. We do not do good works in order to be saved. But anyone who receives God's salvation will of necessity produce good works. You cannot be saved and still remain the same. And the good news is that even those good works that come as a result of God's saving grace are a gift from Him.

- Our only part is to accept God's gift of salvation which is in His Son, Jesus Christ. He does not force anyone to be saved. See Deuteronomy 30:19, Joshua 24:15 and Acts 16:30 and 31.
- So God's gift is three fold: grace, faith and works. None of these three is from us. This is a mystery very profound to understand.

### What extremes should we avoid always?

We should avoid an extreme view that suggests that works (God's commandments) are not part of our Christian moral and ethical requirements – that all we need is faith.

We should also avoid another extreme view which suggests that obeying God's commandments is what saves us.

### What is the intimate relationship between faith and obedience?

ROMANS 3: 31

*Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.*

REVELATION 14: 12

*Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*

JAMES 2: 17

*Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

- Romans, Revelation and James see an inseparable relationship between faith and law.
- It's not enough just to be saved and stop there.
- A born-again person manifests her new relationship with God through obedience.

1 JOHN 5: 3

*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.*

JOHN 14: 15

*If you love Me, keep my commandments.*

- Salvation gets us into a loving relationship with Jesus Christ.
- And faith and obedience is how we love Him in return.

### Does God's salvation ignore our sinful past?

EZEKIEL 18: 21 – 23

*"But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all my statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions he has committed shall be remembered against him... Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord God, "and not that he should turn from his ways and live."*

1 JOHN 1: 9

*If you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

- God's grace is unconditional. The moment we accept Christ as our personal Saviour, our whole past life of sin gets forgiven. We will stand before Him as if we had never sinned.
- As a saved person, you will do well to ask God's forgiveness and grace to avoid repeating past mistakes and to receive power to overcome any current and future mistakes. He is always willing to do that for us.

### Hope and Healing Moment

JOHN 3: 17

*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

- When God looks at us, He sees what we can become through His love. He already knows that we are sinners and so He is wise enough to know that condemnation does not make us better, but worse.

## What do you think about this study?

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## Here Is What The Bible Says About A New Walk With God

### Special Nugget

2 CORINTHIANS 5: 17

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

### How did sin affect our relationship with our Creator?

ISAIAH 59: 2

*But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you...*

- Sin created a gap between us and our Maker.
- We lost the right to be called the children of God.

### What did God do to restore the broken relationship?

2 CORINTHIANS 5: 18 AND 19

*Now all things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ...*

- God, in His mercy, took the initiative to reconcile us to Himself. He did so by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us.
- The death of Christ offered unconditional forgiveness to all human beings irrespective of whether we would accept the offer or not. So, whether one person finds himself in heaven and another in hell, they are both forgiven.
- However, to be reconciled back into God's family, and to be called a child of God again, requires that we each take certain steps to accept His unconditional forgiveness.
- Remember, we did not choose to be created. We did not choose to be forgiven. However, to be reconciled (readmitted) into a relationship with God requires that we exercise our free will. It now rests upon each one of us to choose to be His child or not. "And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24: 15.

## What steps should we take to show our individual willingness to be God's children?

JOHN 3: 16

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

- Believe in Christ

ACTS 2: 38

*Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

- Repent (make a U-Turn and return to God)
- Be baptized

1 JOHN 1: 9

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

- Confess your sins

HEBREWS 10: 25

*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much more as you see the day approaching.*

- Belong to the body of believers (the church family)

2 PETER 3: 18

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...*

- Grow spiritually by gaining more knowledge about matters of salvation and faith

### How are we born again?

JOHN 3: 3 - 5

*Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when He is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus*

answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

- Baptism is a symbol of being born again.
- Baptism is a physical thing. It requires water.
- Baptism is a spiritual thing. It requires the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 6: 1 – 4

*Or do you know that as many of us were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into His death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.*

- Baptism is an enactment of the death of Christ. He willingly died. He was buried. He was resurrected. He experienced a new nature after resurrection.
- Romans 6:3 and 4 stipulate that baptism follows the same flow of events as what happened to Jesus: You willingly choose to let your old self die (you repent). You are buried into a watery grave (baptismal pool). You are taken out of the watery grave as a symbol of resurrection. You lead a life of holy living.
- This suggests that the church should only baptize people who consciously accept Christ (Acts 16: 30); who are remorseful for their past life (Romans 7: 24); who are willing to repent (Acts 2: 38); who are willing to be buried under water (Matthew 3: 13 to 16 and John 3: 21) and who desire to live a life that honours God (Matthew 5: 16). So infant baptism does not meet these requirements because infants know nothing.

### Does the act of baptism make us ethically and morally perfect as we come out of the water?

2 PETER 1: 5 – 9

*But also for this reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is short-sighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.*

2 PETER 3: 18

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...*

- Baptism is not a destination of moral, social and spiritual perfection.
- It is rather part of the journey to infinite spiritual growth.

1 JOHN 2: 1

*My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus the righteous.*

- You can still make mistakes after baptism. But a born-again Christian will not remain stuck in the mud. They will rise again and shine. God is still gracious and loving. He is always ready to forgive us. Although His forgiveness is available all the time, we would do our relationship with Him great service if we make every effort to avoid sinning knowingly and willingly (See Roman 5:20 and 6:1, 2).

### How many times can a person be baptized again?

You can be re-baptized whenever you repent from grievous sins that publicly damage the reputation of the church.

You can be re-baptized after receiving a mega religious changing truth (Acts 19:1 – 5).

### What is one of the major promises we can claim as we walk with God in life?

1 CORINTHIANS 10: 13

*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

### Hope and Healing Moment

2 CORINTHIANS 5: 17

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

- As a snake casts off its old skin, so Christ can cast off our bad habits and give us a new, vibrant beginning in life. We all deserve better and that is what God wants for each one of us.

## What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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- **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I need God to help me act on the truth I have heard.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
- I need aided personal Bible studies.
- Help me with any resources that explain the discussed subject matter in detail.
- I need a personal visit for emotional and spiritual support.
- I want to be baptized.

## My contacts

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Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Here Is What The Bible Says About Itself

### Special Nugget

JOHN 8: 32

*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.*

### How did the Scriptures originate?

2 PETER 1: 21

*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

- The Scriptures are an idea originated of God.
- He is the One who is reaching the world through them.

2 TIMOTHY 3: 16

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...*

- God guided human writers to pen His thoughts and views.
- So He owns the Bible and this is what makes it very different from the other books whose origin is merely human.

### What is the major reason that God created the Bible?

JOHN 5: 39

*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*

JOHN 17: 3

*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus whom You have sent.*

- The Bible is a special revelation of the Creator God.
- It is also a special revelation of Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation.

## How else is the Bible necessary to human life?

PSALM 119: 105

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

- God's word is likened to light in darkness. It shows the way.

MICAH 6: 8

*He has shown you, O man. What is good...*

- God's word helps us differentiate between good and evil.

2 TIMOTHY 3: 15 – 17

*And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

- The Bible helps us to understand the plan of salvation.
- The Bible is the custodian of all Christian doctrines. So, for anything to be doctrinal, it should be based on Biblical revelation.
- The Bible advises on matters of holy living and the like.

JOHN 17: 17

*Sanctify them by Your word. Your word is truth.*

- The Bible contains all the truth necessary for salvation and spiritual growth.
- It also helps us live a holy life.

### Does truth really matter or should people just worship as they please?

JOHN 4: 23

*But the hour is coming, and now is when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.*

- God demands that we worship Him in truth.

JOHN 8: 32

*And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

- Truth is what sets us free from Satan's deceptions.
- The Christian church should be united on the basis of biblical truth. Truth is truth. It is not denominational (church based).

MATTHEW 7: 21 – 23

*Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"*

- Obedience to God's will is far greater than miracles.
- People stand to lose salvation if their focus is just on miracles and not truth.

MATTHEW 15: 8 – 9

*These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*

- Human teachings that are not based on Biblical truth are futile regardless of how religious and sweet they may sound.

2 THESSALONIANS 2: 9 AND 10

*The power of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they may be saved.*

- A religion that defies God's truth ultimately leads to eternal loss.
- God is not looking for religious people to take to heaven. He wants obedient children who obey His word.

### How important is daily Bible reading?

PSALM 33: 6 AND 9

*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.*

- The Bible is an embodiment of God's word.
- God's word has the power to create.

HEBREWS 4: 12

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of thoughts and intents of the heart.*

- Anyone who reads the Bible submissively and prayerfully, gets guidance, including being regenerated on a daily basis.
- It gives us the basis to resist temptations. See Matthew 4: 1-11

### Hope and Healing Moment

PSALM 119: 11

*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*

- Victory over sin is victory over guilt because guilt destroys our health.

### What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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### Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:

- I need God to help me base my faith on the Bible and the Bible alone.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
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- Help me with any resources that explain the discussed subject matter in detail.
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Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Here Is What The Bible Says About The Creator God

### Special Nugget

REVELATION 14: 6 AND 7

*Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people – saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”*

**According to the Bible, what is the minimum irreducible attribute that qualifies anything to be called God?**

ISAIAH 42: 5

*Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it.*

- The ability to create qualifies anything to be God.
- According to the Bible, this is the first attribute to check for against anything that is purported to be a god.

**What are the other important attributes that the Bible considers?**

PSALM 90: 1 AND 2

*Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

- The true God is one who is eternal. He has no beginning or an end. He is eternally present.
- If a being or object people worship is in existence now, but was not before, then it is part of the created things. It cannot be God from a biblical point of view.

1 TIMOTHY 6: 16

*Who alone has immortality, dwelling in approachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honour and everlasting power. Amen.*

- It is impossible for the Creator to die. He is life itself. But all created things can die. It does not matter what they are.

ISAIAH 46: 9 AND 10

*Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done...*

- The Creator possesses all knowledge that pertains to the eternal past and to the eternal future. His knowledge of reality is infinite and timeless.

**Which three beings in the Bible are associated with the title Creator in the Bible?**

MATTHEW 28: 19

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

2 CORINTHIANS 13: 14

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.*

- The three co-eternal Beings are the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit.
- These three are responsible for bringing the universe (matter) into existence. Outside them, there is nothing that came into existence, neither will there be anything that will ever come into existence. No one else has claim over matter apart from these three.
- See also Colossians 1: 12 – 17; Hebrews 1: 1 and 2; John 1: 1 – 3, 14; Psalm 104: 24 – 31.

**What does the Creator say about what to worship?**

EXODUS 20: 3 – 5 NKJV

*You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image – any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...*

- According to the Creator, it is illegal to worship things that did not create.

REVELATION 14: 6 – 7

*Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people –*

saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

- The true gospel cannot fail to address creation.
- For creation informs us on who to worship and what doctrines to believe.
- So, our salvation story is best celebrated when worship is directed back to the Creator.

### What is designed to remind people of the Creator?

EXODUS 20: 8 AND 11

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

- The Sabbath is our perpetual reminder of the office and the rights God has over creation. He is the Creator. Please note, the full discussion on the Sabbath is covered in detail in the next presentations.

### Hope and Healing Moment

MATTHEW 6: 25 TO 31 AND 34

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin. And yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

- Worry does not solve any problem. Instead, it creates more problems for us, like lack of sleep and poor health.
- When we have done our best to provide our needs, but still remain challenged, worrying over our future will not help.
- We can all trust that the Creator God will take care of our needs. We may not know how and we may not know when, but He will do something about it in His own time.

- He who created the universe will not fail to take care of those who trust in His holy name.
- Stop worrying and start living.

## What do you think about this study? - Day Eight

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

- \_\_\_\_\_  
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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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- **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

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## Here Is What The Bible Says About The Sabbath (Part 1)

### Special Nugget

ISAIAH 58: 13 AND 14

*If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honourable, and shall honour Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

### How did the Creation Sabbath come into being?

1<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF CREATION – LIGHT

GENESIS 1: 3 –AND 5

*Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God called the light day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.*

2<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF CREATION – SKY

GENESIS 1: 6 AND 8

*Then God said, "Let there be a firmament from the waters in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God called the firmament heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.*

3<sup>RD</sup> DAY OF CREATION – DRY LAND, SEAS AND VEGETATION

GENESIS 1: 9, 10, 11 AND 13

*Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas... Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields fruit according to its kind...So evening and morning were the third day.*

4<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF CREATION – SUN, MOON AND STARS

GENESIS 1: 14 – 19

*Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for seasons, and for days and years... Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made stars also. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.*

5<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF CREATION – WATER CREATURES AND BIRDS

GENESIS 1: 20 AND 23

*Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens. So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.*

6<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF CREATION – LAND CREATURES AND HUMAN BEINGS

GENESIS 1: 24 – 31

*Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind... Then God said, "Let Us make man in our image, according to our likeness... So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them... So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

7<sup>TH</sup> DAY – CREATION SABBATH

GENESIS 2: 1 – 3

*Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had done.*

### What is the 7<sup>th</sup> Day of Creation called?

EXODUS 20: 8 – 11

*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is **the Sabbath of the LORD your God**. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heavens and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

### Are there other types of sabbaths apart from the Creation Sabbath? If so, how different are they from the Creation Sabbath?

Leviticus 23 lists two different types of Sabbaths:

➤ **CREATION SABBATH**

LEVITICUS 23: 3

*Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is **the Sabbath of the LORD** in all your dwellings.*

- ❖ This text gives reference to six days of work followed by the Sabbath (weekly cycle). Both The New Kings James and the original King James Versions supply the definite article 'the' and a capitalized Sabbath to denote Creation Sabbath.
- ❖ The Creation Sabbath is generally addressed as the Sabbath of the LORD.
- ❖ We need to keep the two preceding rules in mind because they will always help us understand how to interpret the term Sabbath or sabbath right through the Bible.

#### ➤ CEREMONIAL OR FESTIVE SABBATHS

LEVITICUS 23: 4

*These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times:*

- ❖ This is in reference to annual religious feasts that were celebrated at various seasons and times during the Old Testament era. These special ceremonies required people to rest from work because they were considered holy. As revealed in Leviticus 23, these ceremonies were also called sabbaths (rest) days. However, they did not necessarily fall on the seventh day of the week as in the case of the Creation Sabbath.

- Leviticus 23: 5-36 list the various feasts which were regarded as ceremonial sabbaths. Here is an example:

LEVITICUS 23: 26, 27, AND 32

*And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering to the Lord. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening you shall celebrate your sabbath."*

**N. B:** A ceremonial sabbath carries an indefinite article 'a' and this type of sabbath is not capitalized in the KJV or NKJV in order to differentiate it from the Creation Sabbath.

EXODUS 20: 8 – 11

- The Creation Sabbath is listed as one of the Ten Commandments.

EXODUS 31: 18

*And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the testimony (commandments – inserted), tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.*

- The Creation Sabbath was written by God Himself on stone together with the other commandments signifying permanence.

1 JOHN 5: 3

*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.*

- We need to keep this text in mind, especially the idea that the Ten Commandments are not a burden. This is one of the most distinguishing marks between the Creation Sabbath and ceremonial sabbaths. We will come back to this observation in the next presentation.

ISAIAH 58: 13 AND 14

*If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honourable, and shall honour Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

- Creation Sabbath is designed for our pleasure.
- Unfortunately, some people, like the Pharisees, made it a burden. See Matthew 12: 1 forward.
- But, thank God for Jesus who demonstrated in the New Testament that the Sabbath is a day of healing and of great happiness. See Matthew 12: 10 to 13.

### Hope and Healing Moment

MATTHEW 11: 28 TO 30

*Come to Me (Christ – inserted), all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*

- God values human peace and tranquillity. No wonder He had to inscribe our need of rest as one of the commandments.
- But the Sabbath of itself does not give us emotional and spiritual rest if Christ is not in it.
- Christ is our peace. He is everything that our souls need in order to enjoy inner peace and rest from the cares of this world.
- He does not replace the significance of why God gave us the Sabbath, but He is the rest that that day should give us. Besides, His rest to us does not follow a weekly cycle. It is 24/7.

## What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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## Here Is What The Bible Says About The Sabbath (Part 2)

### Special Nugget

ISAIAH 66: 22 AND 23

"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the Lord. "So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the Lord.

### What was the fate of ceremonial sabbaths after the death of Christ on the Cross?

COLOSSIANS: 2: 14, 16 AND 17

...having wiped out the handwriting of the requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

- These ceremonial sabbaths, together with their feasts (ceremonial food requirements and preparation, drink offerings and animal sacrifices), represented the life, ministry, death and priesthood of Christ.
- The reason for their institution was that each Jewish religious feast was some kind of a lesson to teach the Jews mainly about the Messiah who would come as the Redeemer. This is why God chose them to be a special nation. They needed to understand the plan of salvation and then share it with the rest of the world. So the old Testament Jewish history is more of a nation in the classroom studying symbols of the future reality. And Christ was that reality.
- For example, the Day of Atonement was the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary – in other words, the removal of all the forgiven sins confessed by the Jews. This was done annually. This event was totally symbolic. Unfortunately, animal blood could not in essence cleanse sin. But the blood of Christ is the real redemptive requirement needed to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary of all our sins including past sins committed during the days of the earthly sanctuary. Hence, the argument of Paul in Colossians that the coming of Christ made the symbolic system defunct.
- For our appreciation, let's hear what John says in 1 John 5: 3 and then compare and contrast it with what Paul says in Colossians 2: 14 to 17.

1 JOHN 5: 3

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

- The sabbaths in Colossians 2: 14 to 17 demonstrate that:
  - ❖ They were written by the finger of Moses, not God's finger.
  - ❖ They were requirements of ordinances (ceremonies), not commandments.
  - ❖ They were burdensome. The animal, food and drink rituals were cumbersome.
  - ❖ They played a symbolic role. God did not intend to make them permanent.
  - ❖ They were mainly meant for the Jews through whom the Messiah would be born.

N. B: When Paul also says that no one should judge us about food and drink, he is referring to the ceremonial foods and drinks. He is not giving us permission to eat and drink anything that can find its way into our mouths. Who would want to eat snakes or drink alcoholic beverages and still feel nothing wrong with that as a Christian?

### Did the Jews of Old Testament times really know the difference between the Creation Sabbath and the ceremonial sabbaths?

LEVITICUS 23: 37 AND 38

These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day – besides the Sabbaths of the LORD...

- The Jewish culture was never confused on the issue of the Creation Sabbath and the sabbaths of feasts. Remember, to the Jews, sabbath simply means a day of rest. So festive sabbaths were special rest days (equivalent to what we call holidays today) in honour of important national ceremonies.

### Did Paul stop keeping the Creation Sabbath when the ceremonial sabbaths lost their place in the Christian church?

- No. The churches Paul planted were Sabbath keeping. See Acts 16: 8-15.
- Paul himself had a culture of attending church on weekly Sabbaths. See the book of Acts (for example, 17: 2).
- We have no record in the New Testament that seems to suggest, even remotely, that Paul adopted a different day of worship other than the Sabbath.

## Does the Bible warn us about the manner in which Paul wrote his arguments?

### If so, how?

2 PETER 3: 15 AND 16

And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation – as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of Scriptures.

- Paul is not a simple, down to earth writer like Peter and others.
- His presentation of arguments is rather confusing; no wonder Peter's caution.
- We need to read in between the lines to understand exactly what he is talking about.
- We also need to understand the context under which he is writing. For instance, from Acts to Hebrews, you can see that the main problem of his day was that the Jews who had become Christians from Judaism still wanted to cling to Old Testament ceremonies and rituals that had become defunct. And so Paul is at pains to help these people to see salvation through and in Christ. They needed to appreciate and embrace the antitype (Christ) and let go the type (symbolic rituals that represented Christ).

## What proof do we have that the Creation Sabbath is eternally bidding to God's church?

- The Creator God kept it as part of creation and set an example for the unfallen church in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 2: 1-3. The Sabbath is older than sin. It is also older than the Jewish nation.
- The Old Testament Church kept the Sabbath.
- Jesus kept the Sabbath – Luke 4: 16.
- The New Testament Church kept the Sabbath. There is no proof that they did otherwise.
- The end time remnant church keeps the whole Law of which Sabbath is a part. Exodus 20: 3 – 17; James 2: 10 – 12, Revelation 14: 12; 12: 17 and Matthew 5: 17 to 19.
- God's law cannot be altered by human decision. It remains intact because it is the standard by which people will be judged.

❖ MATTHEW 5: 18 – 19

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of God.

❖ ECCLESIASTES 12: 13 AND 14

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or bad.

❖ SEE ALSO JAMES 2: 10 – 12.

- The Creator and the redeemed throughout eternity will keep the Sabbath in the earth made new.

ISAIAH 66: 22 AND 23

"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the Lord. "So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the Lord.

## What special purpose does the Creation Sabbath serve?

EXODUS 20: 8 – 11

- It is a symbol of God's ownership of the universe.
- It is a symbol of His authority over created works. Since He created everything, He has the right to institute laws and demand obedience.

EZEKIEL 20: 12, 20

Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them. Hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God.

- The Creation Sabbath identifies the Creator as the only God upon whom our salvation depends. Outside Him, there is no salvation.

REVELATION 14: 6, 7

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people – saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

- The Sabbath is a constant reminder of and a call to worship the Creator. Creation is the reason why He should be the only one to be worshipped. And, according to the Bible, the gods who did not create do not deserve such an honour.

- To remove the doctrine of the Sabbath from the church is to commit a more grievous sin than any known sin because its removal violates the claims the Creator has over His creation. All governments on earth have symbols of authority which should not be violated. So it is with God the Creator when it comes to the Sabbath as a symbol of His authority over nature.

### Which day is the Sabbath?

- The Bible says the seventh day of the week based on the creation week. Please note: it's not any other day, but the seventh.
- Conventional dictionaries say Saturday is the seventh day of the week.
- The Esther Holiday confirms that Saturday is the Sabbath and Sunday (the resurrection day of our Lord) is the first day of the week. See the sequence of days around the death, burial and the resurrection of Jesus in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John).

### Hope and Healing Moment

JOHN 16: 13

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...

- None of us knows everything.
- And there is so much that we still need to know.
- Thank God for the Holy Spirit who unfolds truth in chunks that we can swallow, digest and absorb.
- Christianity is a journey of perpetual revelations. We can never stop learning.
- What a beauty it is to belong to the God who is infinite in wisdom and knowledge.
- Imagine what kind of knowledge we can possess if we would allow God to teach and guide us.

### What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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• **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I need God to help me keep His Creation Sabbaths.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
- I need aided personal Bible studies.
- Help me with any resources that explain the discussed subject matter in detail.
- I need a personal visit for emotional and spiritual support.

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Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**HOPE AND HEALING BIBLE STUDIES - Day Eleven**

**Here Is What The Bible Says About  
The Mystery Called Christ**

**Special Nugget**

JOHN 1: 1: 1 – 4, 12 AND 14

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father.*

**Looking at the Special Nugget above. What makes Jesus unique?**

JOHN 1: 1: 1 – 4, 12 AND 14

- He has an eternal past.
- He is God and has always been, even before His human birth by Mary. So He existed long before His human birth.
- He is the Creator. He created His mother as well as the whole universe.
- He is the life giver.
- He is the revelation of the invisible God.
- He is the one through whom God the Father is reconciling the world unto Himself. See also 2 Corinthians 5: 18.
- He put on humanity in order to physically dwell with us.
- He is fully God and yet fully human.

**What do the Old Testament prophets say about Him?**

ISAIAH 7: 14

*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*

- Mary conceived of Jesus without any sperm from man. Her pregnancy was purely a mystery from God. Please see Matthew 1: 18 to 23.

ISAIAH 9: 6

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

- The Old Testament announced that the Messiah (Christ) would enter the world through a birth process. He would not just appear or drop from heaven. He needed to be born into this world.
- He is God born as human.

MICAH 5: 2

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting.

- Christ's birth place was announced hundreds of years before it actually happened. Please see Matthew 2: 1.

ISAIAH 53: 5 AND 12B

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. Because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

- Christ was born to pay the price of sin on our behalf through His sacrificial death. Please see also Romans 5: 8.

### Why was it necessary for God to have been born in human flesh?

HEBREWS 9: 22

And according to the law all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

COLOSSIANS 1: 14

In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

- Without blood, there was not going to be forgiveness of sin. So the justice of God against sin required someone perfect to die and to be the Saviour of the world. That perfect being was Christ (Hebrews 2: 14-18). He died our death so we could live His life.

HEBREWS 2: 18

For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

- Christ is the expression of God's intimate relationship with us.
- He loved us so much that He was willing to taste our human experience as He was on the mission to conquer sin on our behalf.

1 JOHN 2: 6

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

- He came to show the example of victorious Christian living.

JOHN 14: 8 – 11

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not yet known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

- Jesus came to reveal the invisible Father and His love. Please see also Colossians 1: 15 and John 3: 16

### What is Jesus' main function ever since His resurrection?

HEBREWS 9: 11, 12

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood he entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

- Christ is now our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

### Do we still need earthly priests?

JOHN 14: 6 AND 7

Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

1 JOHN 2: 1

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

- Access to the Father is now only through Jesus Christ.

- Human priestly office ended at the Cross.

### What happened to the earthly priestly system?

HEBREWS 7: 22 – 27

By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is able also to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once and for all when He offered up Himself.

- Christ is the High Priest of the New Covenant whose tabernacle is in heaven. So human priests are no longer needed since all intercession of the saints is done directly by Jesus to the Father.
- The earthly priestly system under the Old Covenant came to an end at the death of Christ. It offered intercession through the blood of animals, but the blood of Jesus has since replaced that system.
- Earthly priests were also sinners who needed grace, but Jesus is sinless. He is the Saviour of everyone.

### What relationship exists between Christ and the church?

- He is the head of the church:
  - Colossians: 1: 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.
  - Ephesians 5: 23 and 24
- For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the Church...
  - Matthew 28: 18  
And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth."
  - Philippians 2: 8 – 11
- And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of

those in heaven, and of those on earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### How should we respond to the Lordship of Christ?

JOHN 14: 15

If you love Me, keep my commandments.

1 JOHN 5: 3

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

REVELATION 14: 12

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

- We need to embrace the lordship of Christ.
- Our obedience to Him should be a manifestation of our deep love and respect.
- We should recognize Him as the highest officer (head) of the church.

### Hope and Healing Moment

- How does Jesus treat those who have no knowledge of some truths?

JOHN 10: 15 AND 16

As the Father knows Me, and even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

- Christ loves us and treats us as His own sheep even if we may be ignorant of some truths.

EPHESIANS 4: 3 – 6

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all.

- Christ wants to see us united on the basis of truth; hence the need to share His truth with everyone in our sphere of influence.

ACTS 17: 30

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.

- Ignorance causes us to offend God unintentionally.
- God understands and may choose to wink an eye.
- But rejecting truth threatens our relationship with Him.
- However, sincere truth seekers will have no resistance, but will accept God's revelation as Christ says in John 10: 15 and 16.

### What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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• **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I would like to accept Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
- I need aided personal Bible studies.
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**Here Is What The Bible Says About The Rise Of A Religious-  
Political Kingdom In Western Europe (Part 1)**

**Special Nugget**

REVELATION 14: 12

*Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*

**Besides King Nebuchadnezzar, who else had a dream about world affairs?**

DANIEL 7: 1

*In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.*

**What did he see?**

DANIEL 7: 2 – 7 NKJV

*Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings... And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth... After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I saw...a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and had ten horns.*

**What special features of this dream do we need to understand?**

- What is represented by the Great Sea?
- What is represented by the four winds?
- What does the term beast refer to in prophecy?
- What do wings represent?
- What do ribs, heads and horns represent?

### What else did Daniel see happening on the fourth beast?

DANIEL 7: 8 NKJV

"I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words."

N. B: Three things that are special about the little horn in Daniel 7: 8: It is a horn. This description is key to identifying who it is.

- It comes after the other horns are established.
- Three of the ten horns on the fourth beast are uprooted as it comes up.
- It speaks pompous words or words of blasphemy.

### How did the dream proceed?

DANIEL 7: 9, 10, 11, 13, AND 14

I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated... A fiery stream issued and came forth from Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was set, and the books were opened. I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.

- We see a judgment scene in heaven.
- We see One described as the Son of Man approaching the courtroom in heaven.
- The Son of Man is given an everlasting kingdom over all the earth.

### Did Daniel know the meaning of this dream by himself?

DANIEL 7: 15 AND 16

I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things.

### What was the interpretation of the beasts and horns?

DANIEL 7: 17, 18, 23 AND 24

Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. Thus he said, "The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings who shall rise from this kingdom. And another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings."

- Beasts are kingdoms and in Daniel 7, they represent 4 world kingdoms.
- Horns represent kings (divided kingdoms) that arise after the fall of the fourth world empire.
- The little horn is also a kingdom or political power, unique from the other kingdoms

### What are the similarities and differences between Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's dreams?

Kingdom	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream	Daniel's Dream
<u>Babylon</u>	Head of Gold	Lion
Medo-Persia	Arms and Chest of Silver	Bear with three ribs in its mouth
<u>Greece</u>	Belly and Thighs of Bronze	Leopard with four wings and four heads
<u>Rome</u>	Legs of Iron	Terrible beast with ten horns
<u>Divided tribal Kingdoms of Europe</u>	Ten Toes Partly Iron and Partly Clay	*Ten Horns on the Fourth Beast
<u>Religious-Political Kingdom</u>	Not mentioned	Little horn
Kingdom of <u>Christ Saints</u> and the	The Rock that becomes a great mountain	The Kingdom of the Son of Man and the saints

\*Please note: Sometimes a number is not equal to its sum total in prophecy. It may sometimes be symbolic and it is not always easy to tell. So the bigger picture from the ten horns is about the message they represent more than how many they are. In Daniel 7, therefore, they depict the

division of the Roman Empire into small tribal kingdoms after its fall and that is the main fact the prophet is telling us. The Roman Empire fell and got divided into small tribal kingdoms.

### Hope and Healing Moment

AMOS 3: 7

Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

- To be warned is to be pre-armed.
- God has unfolded history in advance, therefore world events should not take us by surprise.
- Prior knowledge of future events should develop resilience in us in the wake of any local or global crisis.
- Prophecy is meant to help us make informed decisions on impending local or world events. So God's aim is not just to show us His ability to foretell the future. He wants to help us to be proactive and not to be caught unprepared.

### What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
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- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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• **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I need God to help me value His ability to know history in advance and to stand guided by His foreknowledge.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
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**HOPE AND HEALING BIBLE STUDIES - Day Thirteen**

**Here Is What The Bible Says About The Rise Of A Religious-  
Political Kingdom In Europe (Part 2)**

**Special Nugget**

DANIEL 12: 9 AND 10

And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."

**Before we identify who the little horn is, what are its special features that we need to understand so that we may arrive at the correct interpretation?**

DANIEL 7: 24

The ten horns are ten kings who shall rise from this kingdom (Roman Empire – inserted). And another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings.

- The little horn is a unique kingdom or political power.
- Its rise to power is strategically preceded by the destruction of three European kingdoms.
- The little horn is located in Europe.

DANIEL 7: 25

He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

- This little horn is also a religious power.
- It persecutes the saints
- It exercises its authority over the law of God – assuming, as it were, the very power of God on earth: Please see a text from the New Testament below:

2 THESSALONIANS 2: 3 AND 4

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day (the second coming of Christ – inserted) will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is

called God or that is worshipped. So that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

- It persecutes the saints for 1260 years (time, times and half a time = three and half years) following the defeat of the last kingdom opposed to papacy as indicated below. This is how we calculate the 1260 years given that each month in ancient times was based on a thirty-day period and time meant a full year.
  - ❖ Time = one year (30 days x 12 = 360)
  - ❖ Times = two years (30 days x 24 = 720)
  - ❖ Half a time = six months (30 days x 6 = 180)
  - ❖ Total number of days 1260
  - ❖ Using the day for a year prophetic principle (see Ezekiel 4: 6 and Numbers 14: 34), 1260 days amount to 1260 years.

DANIEL 7: 26

But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.

- This power is seen alive even in the last days of the earth's history.
- Only God the Creator will destroy this power forever.
- Of all the kingdoms, this one is the one that incites God's wrath above any other because it attempts to rewrite (change) His law.

### Facts of history

The history-based prophecies of Daniel are empirical – evidence based. They are based on tested data – things that are known to have actually happened. So let's see how history confirms who this little horn is. We are putting Daniel to a test here. All the features he listed should help us find without question who best fits his prophetic description:

- History confirms that the four great world kingdoms came in the order that appears in Daniel 2 and 7. This is authentic. No true historian can refute that.
  - Babylon was the first.
  - Medo-Persia followed after conquering three nations (Lydia, Egypt and Babylon). Hence the three ribs in its mouth.
  - Greece was next, under Alexander the Great. After his death, Greece was divided among his four generals. Hence the four heads of the leopard.
  - The last world empire was Rome.
  - Each of the four world kingdoms came into existence by defeating another world kingdom. This is signified by coming out of the Great Sea:

REVELATION 17: 15

Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are people, multitudes, nations, and tongues."

Large bodies of water in prophecy sometimes represent multitudes or nations.

- The four winds that stirred up the sea obviously have to do with the wars that were fought among kings.
- The wings represent speed of conquest.
- After the fall of Rome, the separate self-ruled tribes (kingdoms) of Europe came into existence.
- Justinian 1, emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire (Then known as the Byzantium Empire) fought and defeated three nations that stood opposed to Catholic theology of Trinitarianism. These kingdoms were the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths. The Ostrogoths were the last to be defeated in A. D 538. The defeat of these three tribes, with time, led to their extinction as kingdoms. There are nowhere to be traced in modern history. So from A. D 538, the papal kingdom assumed control of religion over all the churches in Europe. And even though the kings of Europe were running self-ruled kingdoms, they paid homage to papacy until 1798. This was at the height of the French Revolution. France took the pope prisoner and he later died 1799. Ultimately, the French Revolution brought a mortal wound to the reign of papacy as a political power in Western Europe. So for some time papal political significance in Europe died.

The papal kingdom did the following, which is confirmed by history:

- ❖ It is the only system which is both religious and political which performed atrocities against religious opposition for the longest period ever recorded in Western Civilization.
- ❖ It is the only system which led to the most famous Reformation and Protestantism in Europe and the rest of the world.
- ❖ It is the only religious system that revised the Ten Commandments and rewrote them in its own version without biblical authority. The evidence includes changing the Sabbath observance from Saturday to Sunday; eliminating the second commandment which forbids idol worship; and splitting the tenth into two. This act fulfils Daniel 7: 25:

*He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law.*

The Sabbath is the only commandment within the Ten Commandments that addresses time and the Catholic Catechism shows how the Catholic church altered it including providing the reason for doing so. Please request the facilitator of this presentation for any tangible proof from the Catholic Catechism or you may just google for yourself – Catholic

Catechism: Ten Commandments – Commandment Three. Check also Commandment Two; Nine and Ten and compare them with what is in the Bible Exodus 20: 3 – 17.

- ❖ The papal state (now known as the Vatican State) is situated in Western Europe. So the Catholic headquarters in Italy is both a church organization and a state (government) – the smallest state in Europe.
- ❖ Emperor Justinian 1 facilitated the defeat of three kingdoms that stood opposed to Catholic theology as indicated earlier. This, too, is a fact of history.

There is overwhelming evidence that the Vatican State, of which the papacy is the head, is the little horn in Daniel 7. All evidence in history and prophecy point in that direction.

### Hope and Healing Moment

DANIEL 12: 9 AND 10

*And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. God does not give us prophecy in order to hide some truth.*

- Rather, prophecy reveals His ability to foretell the future.
- The symbolic language used in prophecy makes us to depend on Him for revelation.
- The fulfilment of prophecy boosts our confidence in God.
- This confidence and trust help us to develop a righteous relationship with Him.
- Unfortunately, some refuse to appreciate the plain truths which Bible prophecy brings. This resistance takes them far away from God.
- God, however, opens the eyes of the humble and the willing to see clearly how events are leading to the end of the world. This revelation is what we need to overcome the deceptions that Satan unleashes on unsuspecting minds.

### What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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**Here Is What The Bible Says About The World's Final****Conflict (Part 1)****Special Nugget**

REVELATION 18: 4 AND 5

*And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."*

**What did John also see in a vision?**

REVELATION 13: 1 – 10

*Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up from the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and a great authority. And as I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marvelled and followed the beast. So they worshipped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go to captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

**What are some of the features of this beast that are similar to that of the little horn in Daniel 7?**

- It rose among existing nations.

- Its features (that resemble a leopard, a bear and a lion, plus ten horns) indicate a historical background that can be traced back to the four world kingdoms including ancient Europe as recorded in Daniel 7.
- A forty-two month period of supremacy is equal to the period of the little horn in Daniel 7. Forty-two months times 30 days equals 1260 days which basically works to 1260 years according to the day for a year principle we saw in the Ezekiel 4: 6.
- It is a persecuting power.
- It wields both political and religious power.
- It blasphemes God.

N. B: The religious-political power in Revelation 13: 1-10 and the little horn in Daniel 7 is one and the same power. The book of Revelation repeats its history as a bridge to some new developments and detail that Daniel was not given.

### What extra detail does John provide which is not in Daniel?

- The dragon gives it power and authority.
- It once suffered a mortal wound, but later recovered.
- The whole world worships the dragon and the beast which recovers from a mortal wound. The whole world worships it after its recovery from the mortal wound.
- People whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life will worship it.
- It is the global worship of the dragon and the beast that recovers from the mortal wound which Revelation 13 is mostly interested about.

### How does the Bible interpret some of the extra detail supplied by John?

- Dragon:

REVELATION 12: 9

*So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan.*

- Mortal wound:

REVELATION 13: 10

*He who leads into captivity shall go to captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword...*

- The political power of the papacy in Europe came to an end when the reigning pope was taken prisoner to France in 1798 and later died in 1799.
- However, this mortal wound was just temporary as the papal political status recovered in 1929. See Lateran Concordat (Treaty) of 1929.
- But, this recovery has not yet reached to the level of power the papacy had before 1798 nor the predicted level when the whole world follows and worships it.

- Worship the dragon and the Beast

- This is when someone is forced to disregard allegiance to God's truth in favour of human-made religious systems that militate against God's law as Creator.
- This also happens when someone knowingly and wilfully follows a system that intentionally disregards God's will.
- When exactly will the world worship papacy? Revelation 13: 11 – 18 answers this question and the next presentation also addresses this very question. The world deserves to know because ignorance will be eternally costly.

### Hope and Healing Moment

JOHN 10: 16

*And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*

- God has sincere, truth-seeking children in all the different churches around the world.
- When these people hear His truth, they follow it because of their love and loyalty to Him.

## What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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- **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I need God to write my name in the Book of Life.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
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- Help me with any resources that explain the discussed subject matter in detail.
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## Here Is What The Bible Says About The World's Final Conflict (Part 2)

### Special Nugget

REVELATION 18: 4 AND 5

*And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."*

### Is the papacy going to regain the power it had before 1798? If so, how?

REVELATION 13: 11 – 18

*Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercised all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performed great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast...*

- John sees a great nation that comes out of the earth (unlike the rest that came out of the sea) taking matters into its own hands to help the papacy retain the power it had before 1798.
- The lamblike nation that is seen coming out of the dry earth is the only one with this kind of background when compared with the other great kingdoms mentioned in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13. And History confirms that the USA is the only super power to date that was born in what is known as the new world.
- The idea of looking like a domesticated animal (a lamb) suggests that it grew up as a peace-loving nation that esteem freedom or liberty. But John sees its character changing from democracy to dictatorship.

- This lamblike nation is the one that forces the whole world to worship the papacy. It does so by demanding the nations of this world to come up with an international resolution (global agreement) that binds everyone to be part of some religious unity under papacy. This global resolution that binds nations to a particular religious system by coercion is what Revelation 13 calls image of the beast.
- The resolution will make use of any force to achieve its goal, including economic sanctions.
- The global agenda of this lamblike beast will be supported by some religious awakening in the home country of this beast which will speak in favour of world-wide religious unity. This religious awakening will be characterized by what John sees as deceptive miracles of great magnitude.

### What is the mark of the beast which everybody will be forced to receive?

REVELATION 13: 16 AND 17

*He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

- Before we explain what a mark is, we need to appreciate the significance of receiving something on your forehead and on your hand. Our foreheads are where we make rational judgments or decisions and once a decision has been made, we normally apply it. So hands are a symbol of application. Therefore, John is not telling us that there will be a computer chip or a barcode that everyone will receive on their foreheads and hands. It simply means that people will consciously accept and apply the symbol of authority that represents the world religious unity on behalf of papacy.
- Now let's come to the term mark. This term simply means a sign that distinguishes or characterizes something.
- So what is the mark that will be forced on people?
- It will be the papacy's symbol (sign) of authority.
- To understand a mark of authority in biblical terms, let's first understand God's symbol of authority.
- The Sabbath is the Creator's symbol of authority. He instituted it during the creation week by blessing the seventh day and sanctifying (setting it aside) it and He also inserted it among the Ten Commandments to show that He is the Creator and Owner of the universe and its Supreme law giver. Ezekiel 20: 20 says the Sabbath is the sign between the Creator and His people. So the 7th day Sabbath of creation is the mark of the Creator. It distinguishes Him from the gods that did not create.
- Sunday, on the other hand, is the supreme identifying mark of the Catholic Church. They instituted it by transferring the solemnity of Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday without biblical authority (See Ten Commandments # 3: Catholic Catechism). There is

no religious system on earth that formalized Sunday as a rest and regular day of worship apart from the Catholic church – no, not one.

- So the drive for global religious unity will push the adoption of Sunday to be the day of worship for all people across religions. This international resolution will be enforced politically, legally and economically. Any resistance to this new world order will be met with all conceivable force including economic sanctions.
- Sunday is, therefore, the mark of the papacy and its enforcement by law will mark the end of religious freedom on earth as we enjoy it today.

### How is God responding to this impending conflict?

God is proactive and redemptive in nature. So He is warning the whole world to refrain from succumbing to this global apostasy (rebellion) as recorded in Revelation 14: 6 – 12:

- The call to worship the Creator alone:

REVELATION 14: 6 AND 7

*Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people – saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth the sea and springs of water.*

- The international community will use force to demand allegiance to the papacy and to Sunday as the day of worship, but the Creator uses the gospel (good news) to warn the world about this global apostasy. He still respects our power of choice.
- His final warning to the international community before this fallout happens is for us to refrain from worshipping creatures or human systems at any cost. He alone deserves to be worshipped because He alone is the Creator.
- In simple terms, Revelation 13 is the call to worship the Dragon (Satan – see Revelation 13: 4) and chapter 14 is a call to worship the Creator (Christ). There will be no middle ground.
- Again, two forms of Sabbaths will be at war. Revelation 13 pushes for the Catholic made Sabbath (Sunday the 1st day of the week). Revelation 14 advocates for the Creation Sabbath which has always been kept throughout Bible history (Saturday the 7th day of the week – see verse Revelation 14: 12 and 12: 17).

- The worst political and religious error on earth

REVELATION 14: 7

*And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”*

- In spite of the Creator’s warning to refrain from instituting a global religious system that defies His authority, the nations of this world will just go ahead and enforce it. This rebellious unity is what is called ‘Babylon is fallen’ and the ‘wine’ nations are seen drinking is nothing else but false doctrines and rebellious influence.
- Sunday as a regular day of worship is currently practised today, but it is not yet enforced by the rule of law globally. When it becomes an international law (constitutional requirement), then it will have become a legally binding mark which everyone should accept and apply even against free will conscience. This law will be forced on everyone regardless of religious status, religious affiliation, culture or nationality.

- God’s undiluted wrath

REVELATION 14: 9 – 11

*Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”*

- God does not want to burn anyone. However, if His warnings are rejected, He is left with no choice but to execute judgment against rebellion (see Daniel 7: 9 – 11 and 26).

### Will everybody succumb to the international pressure to worship this human made system and what is God’s final call?

REVELATION 14: 12

*Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*

REVELATION 18: 4 AND 5

*And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”*

- Now is the opportunity to make a free conscious decision to obey God. You will not be able to stand tomorrow if you can’t do it today. It is a grave mistake to worship God incorrectly, more especially when His light has shone upon us.

ACTS 17: 30

*Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.*

## Hope and Healing Moment

REVELATION 7: 2 AND 3

*Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."*

- The great controversy on earth will result in two groups living in the last days. One group will bear the mark of the beast – the mark of apostasy or rebellion; and the other, the seal of the Creator God – the seal of salvation and loyalty to His commandments as summarized in Revelation 14: 12:

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

- There will be no middle ground in the final religious conflict on earth.
- The Creator, for now, is still keeping the door open for anyone to receive His seal of salvation and obedience. What a loving God we serve.
- With God's unlimited love towards us, being lost is purely a matter of choice.

## What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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• **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I need God to help me make the right religious decision now so that I am able to stand for the truth no matter what.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
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**HOPE AND HEALING BIBLE STUDIES - Day Sixteen**

**Here Is What The Bible Says About What Happens At Death (Part 1)**

**Special Nugget**

1 CORINTHIANS 15: 51 – 55

*Behold, I tell you a **mystery**; We shall not all **sleep**, but we shall be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be **raised** incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For the corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “O Death, where is your sting? O hades, where is your victory?”*

**Why is death a mystery?**

- It is hard for some of us to get used to losing loved ones through death, no matter how many times we lose someone important to us. Some people go through unbearable grief with each loss.
- Another difficult issue is that there are a lot of diverse teachings about death. Some of the teachings are quite frightening. For instance, there is a belief that the dead are not quite dead. They are alive in a different state. You can speak to them if you want to. Because the dead are alive, they can actually punish us for the wrongs we did to them while they were still living among us. Some misfortunes are attributed to angry spirits of the dead. Others speak of ghosts and mysterious human forms that appear to be the images of the dead. What would you do if you were to get to your bedroom at night and discover that your relative, who died a long time ago, is sitting on the bed waiting for you?
- Some teach that the dead are really dead. They do not know what joys or sorrows we are going through. There are no conscious spirits of dead people, but supernatural demonic spirits that act like our dead loved ones.
- There are those who believe that when we die we come back to life as different creatures. So, according to this belief, horses, mice and other creatures may have been people at some stage.
- Others believe that when one dies, death becomes one's eternal end – no more chance of being alive ever again, in any form.
- Some disagree with the view of death being the end of one's existence. They feel that death is just a phase. God will bring the dead back to life through a process called resurrection.

## What are the two major views on death?

- Spiritualism: The dead are still alive in spirit form.
- Biblical view: The dead are completely dead (unconscious state).

### Spiritualism says:

- The body dies but the spirit (soul) remains alive.
  - The spirit of a dead person operates as a conscious person.
  - The spirit goes about interacting with other spirits, including the people who are not yet dead.
- There is some evidence of living spirits that proponents of spiritualism rely on:
    1. Ghosts and voices
    2. Visions and dreams
    3. Blessings and curses associated with the dead
  - What does spiritualism lead its believers to do?
    1. They consult the dead on some family or personal issues.
    2. They seek to be protected by the dead.
    3. They appease the dead to avoid retribution.
    4. They worship the dead to receive blessings.

## What does the Bible say about the dead?

ECCLESIASTES 9: 5, 6, 10

For the living know they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. The dead are really dead – unconscious of any activity in the land of the living.

- The dead can't express emotions anymore. They are dead.
- They can no longer participate in the affairs of the living.
- The time to do anything for our loved ones is when they and we are still alive.

ECCLESIASTES 3: 18 – 22

I said in my heart, "Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like animals." For what happens to the

sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. All go to one place: all are from dust, and all return to dust. Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes up, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth? So I perceive that nothing is better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that is his heritage. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him? Biologically, human beings and animals carry the same life. The power that keeps animals alive is the same power that keeps us alive.

- There is no breath specifically for animals and a different one for human beings. Life is life and our flesh is made from the same source – the ground (dust).
- The dead cannot see what happens to us in their dead state.

JOB 7: 9 AND 10

As the cloud disappears and vanishes away, so he who goes down to the grave does not come up. He shall never return to his house, nor shall his place know him anymore. The dead do not wake up at all, nor do they ever return to their former homes to be family members again with the living.

JOB 14: 10 – 12

But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he? As water disappears from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dries up, so man lies down and does not arise, till the heavens are no more; they will not awake nor be aroused from their sleep."

- Unless resurrected by the Creator, the dead won't wake up. There is no power that is able to bring them back to life apart from their Maker.
- So death is a state of complete silence and inactivity.

## How does the Bible help us to understand what happens at death?

To understand what happens at death, we should know the formula God used to create human beings.

GENESIS 2: 7

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.

- God used dust (chemicals and minerals) to form the human body.
- He breathed life into Adam. Life is the animating (life giving) energy or power that only comes from God, the source of life.



• **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I need God to help me relate well with others and with Him before I die.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
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**Here Is What The Bible Says About What Happens At Death**

**(Part 2)**

**Special Nugget**

1 CORINTHIANS 15: 26

*The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.*

**Does the death of Christ help us to understand what happens at death?**

Yes. His death happened in exactly the manner we find described in Ecclesiastes 12: 7.

*Then dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it. His body (dust) was buried and His life (spirit) returned to God as life, not as a person in spirit form. Luke 23 helps us to understand what happened:*

LUKE 23: 46

*And Jesus cried out with a loud voice. He said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last. His life returned to God, the source of life. It did not go there as Jesus in spirit form. It was just life. Do not be confused when He says spirit instead of breath of life. The word spirit means a lot of things like life, air, attitude and so on. So the context of the passage decides its meaning. Let us follow this discussion closely and we will notice that the word spirit here just refers to life and not a living person in spirit form.*

LUKE 23: 52, 53

*This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. The body of Jesus was buried as a symbol of returning to the ground (earth).*

- One of the problems around the death of Jesus is the statement He made to one of the criminals who was also dying on the cross next to Him.

LUKE 23: 42, 43:

*Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

- The statement, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise", seems to confirm that people go to heaven immediately after death.

## If the dead are really dead, how does the Bible explain mysterious voices, ghosts and the like?

REVELATION 12: 7 – 10

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and His angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

- The whole universe is in a great controversy between Christ, the Prince of light, and Satan, the prince of darkness.
- The devil and his demons are great architects of deception.
- They use death as a platform to mislead multitudes away from the Creator God and from true worship.

1 SAMUEL 28: 3-20

- This narrative unveils what happens in the sinful world, where the powers of darkness (demons) are in control.
- In the narrative, God is not willing to communicate with Saul at all. He also blocks any form of communication between Saul and godly priests and prophets. But surprisingly, a spirit medium is supposedly able to raise Samuel from among the dead to speak with Saul.
- How can Samuel be found working in partnership with the enemies of God?
- When Samuel wakes up, he tells Saul exactly what is going to happen the next day.
- The devil is so subtle and cunning. He can use truth to deceive many.
- The old man who appears on the wall is not Samuel, but a counterfeit of his image.
- One of the demons posed as Samuel.

## What is the Bible's advice on consulting with spirit mediums or the dead?

DEUTERONOMY 18: 9 – 12

When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD...

- It appears that Jesus and the criminal in question were just waiting for their bodies to die in order to fly to heaven as spirits.
- This is far from the truth. None of them was going to heaven that day after death. When the Bible writers wrote, they did not use punctuation marks (like the comma) as we do today. The comma was inserted recently by translators. The comma in verse 43 is misplaced. Instead of, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise." It should be, "Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in paradise."

The position of the comma changes the whole meaning.

Read John 20: 1 – 7, 11 – 17 carefully.

- Do you notice that the body of Jesus is no longer in the tomb because He has been resurrected?
- He did not just disappear into heaven. He waits for His disciples to witness that He is alive again.
- The same body that had died is the one that awakes.
- He tells Mary Magdalene that, since His death and His resurrection, He has not yet gone to heaven.

JOHN 20: 15 – 17

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"

- After His resurrection, He sends Mary to announce His trip to heaven to the other disciples.
- So the spirit that He committed into His Father's hands when He died on the Friday had no personal identity at all. It was just formless life that would neither speak nor remember anything.
- Thank God, the death of Jesus has left lessons that should guide us in understating death.
- One of the biggest lessons is that, outside of resurrection, the dead remain in a state of complete silence and unconsciousness – and nobody goes to heaven and leaves their body behind – 1 Corinthians 15: 51 – 55.

ISAIAH 8: 19

And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

- We should not play with fire. We need to avoid all the practices listed above at any cost. Anyone who goes or remains there becomes an enemy of God and no enemy of God will have lasting peace in this world, no matter what benefits the devil gives. His benefits always turn out to be curses at the end of the day.

**Is it safe to return to God after one has joined the wrong camp?**

MATTHEW 10: 1

And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

- Jesus is our protection. He has power over demons.

**Hope and Healing Moment**

1 THESSALONIANS 4: 16 - 18

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- As Christians, we have the hope that someday soon the world will end and God will resurrect our dead back to life. What a great reunion it will be as we shall live forever together with Christ our Saviour. See also Revelation 21: 1 - 5.

**What do you think about this study?**

• **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

• **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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• **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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## Here Is What The Bible Says About Speaking In Tongues

### Special Nugget

REVELATION 14: 6

*Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.*

### Who was the first to mention speaking in tongues in the New Testament?

MARK 16: 17

*And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues.*

- Jesus is the one who introduced the subject of tongues to His first disciples.
- He is the one who saw the need for the church to communicate in foreign languages before His followers did.

### What necessitated the need for tongues from Jesus' point of view?

MARK 16: 15

*And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."*

- The Christian church is a global movement.
- Jesus meant it to grow from Palestine until it covers the whole world.
- The commission to spread the gospel beyond the borders of Palestine meant reaching people of diverse cultures and languages.
- Therefore, Christ needed to equip the church for mission by removing the language barrier.

### Who gave the church the ability to speak in other languages?

ACTS 2: 4

*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

### • Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:

- I need God to help me avoid all practices that involve demonic spirits.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
- I need aided personal Bible studies.
- Help me with any resources that explain the discussed subject matter in detail.
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Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- We see that the Holy Spirit is the One who enables disciples to speak in languages other than their native one.

### What was so special about the tongues spoken at Pentecost?

ACTS 2: 7 AND 8

Then they were all amazed and marvelled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?"

- At Pentecost, tongues are real human languages that people can relate with. Listeners are amazed how Galileans are speaking different languages without being taught.
- The mystery of the Pentecostal tongues is that a sermon or a prayer uttered in one language (Hebrew or Greek or whatever) can be heard in all the languages of the people present (seventeen nationalities – Acts 2: 9-11).
- So the miracle of tongues also happens in the ears of the audience. The words that come from Peter's mouth (whatever language he is speaking) are being translated by the Holy Spirit into numerous human languages during his sermon. There is no need for a human interpreter because the Holy Spirit is doing exactly that.

### What was the intent of the gift of tongues at Pentecost?

ACTS 2: 38 AND 39

Now, when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

- The gift of tongues at Pentecost serves a missionary purpose. It is intended to communicate the gospel in the language of the people.
- The New Testament church, therefore, was equipped at inception to be a church that reaches and incorporates all nations.

### What are spiritual gifts and why does the church need them?

1 CORINTHIANS 12: 4 – 6

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

- Spiritual gifts are ways (divinely given abilities) in which the Holy Spirit enables believers to do Christian service of different kinds.
- These special abilities are gifts from God. They are not inherited from parents.

1 CORINTHIANS 12: 7

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

- Every believer receives spiritual gifts.
- The idea behind all believers receiving spiritual gifts is for total member involvement. Church is no place for spectators.
- Spiritual gifts are for service to the church and community. They are not meant for personal gain. No gift is meant for self. We need to remember this rule of thumb because it is the key that helps us understand how to interpret tongues as they appear in 1 Corinthians 14.

EPHESIANS 4: 11 AND 12

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ.

- Some of the spiritual gifts are enabling gifts. They are meant to equip and empower the church for ministry. These kinds of gift play the role of administration, training, motivation and the like. Otherwise, members may just sit on their spiritual gifts and do nothing for the Lord.

### What are some of the examples of spiritual gifts that appear in the Bible?

1 CORINTHIANS 12: 8 – 10

For to one is given the word of wisdom through the same Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

- The distribution of gifts above suggests that not everybody receives all the gifts.
- There is no universal gift that each believer should have.
- Speaking in tongues is, therefore, not a mandatory gift that every believer should have. Paul refutes the idea of thinking that a certain gift should be possessed by all believers. See 1 Corinthians 12: 11, 29 and 30:

- But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

### What is Paul's admonition as he introduces 1 Corinthians 14?

1 CORINTHIANS 14: 1

*Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophecy.*

- There are three very important things in the life of the church according to Paul:
  - ❖ Love
  - ❖ Spiritual gifts in general
  - ❖ The gift of prophecy in particular. We will visit this gift in another series.

### Why is the gift of tongues receiving a low preference rate from Paul in the Corinthians' church?

1 CORINTHIANS 14: 2

*For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*

- This is one of Paul's pieces of writing that confuses many of his readers, especially those who read him out of context. They make conclusions that are far detached from what He is dealing with at the Corinthian church. Before we delve into what verse 2 actually means, let us once again hear the rebuke of Peter to all the readers of Paul's writings as recorded in 2 Peter 3: 15 and 16:

*And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation – as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*

- We should always be guided by the principles set by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in our interpretation of what and how tongues work in the church. For our benefit, let's revisit those principles in Acts 2:
  - ❖ The Holy Spirit gives the church tongues that manifest themselves as intelligible (sensible) human languages.
  - ❖ This gift of tongues is meant for effective communication of the gospel by the church.
  - ❖ No disciple in Acts 2 speaks strange tongues to themselves; the gift is used to speak to others for their edification.

- ❖ Listeners should receive and understand any message that is delivered to them in a foreign language.

- What we see in 1 Corinthians 14: 2 is a total departure from principle and that is why Paul goes to pains to address or rebuke this anomaly. So what is happening in this church?

- ❖ Tongues are serving a selfish purpose. Instead of being a ministry to the church, they are being used for personal edification.
- ❖ The speakers are failing to establish productive communication with the church.

- Please note that Paul is not introducing a different way of speaking in tongues among believers other than what happened at Pentecost. No. He is being very sarcastic in his rebuke to the Corinthian church. Listen to what he is really saying:

- ❖ He who speaks in a language foreign to his audience is just wasting people's time if no interpretation is used. What benefit is the speaker to them?
- ❖ Such a speaker can only be understood by God, Who created all human languages.
- ❖ So, anyone speaking a foreign language to the church and not interpreting it, is just uttering mysteries from his mind (spirit). No one can make sense of what is being said.

- The challenge at Corinth is that it was a cosmopolitan (made up of different nationalities) city. See [www.abrock.com/Greece-Turkey/corinth.html](http://www.abrock.com/Greece-Turkey/corinth.html) for more information. So, people from all the corners of the then world came there to do business or to settle. As a result, the church had believers who spoke different languages. Unfortunately, some people must have prayed or said some stuff in some unfamiliar languages without the use of interpretation. This practice disturbed the order of worship and Paul had to rebuke this practice squarely.

- Let's listen to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14: 6, 7 and 11.

*But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying or by teaching? Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.*

- ❖ The bottom line is that church should also be a place for effective communication. Languages should lead to useful, intelligible worship experiences.

## What corrective steps does Paul give to the Corinthian church?

1 CORINTHIANS 14: 12

*Even so, you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you excel.*

1 CORINTHIANS 14: 13

*Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.*

1 CORINTHIANS 14: 15

*What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding...*

- We should appreciate use of other people's languages, but it's not enough to just pray or sing in a foreign language and still miss what you, yourself, are saying. The mind (spirit – inserted) should not just utter what it does not understand and end there. Otherwise, the whole experience ceases to be of any benefit even to the speaker himself, which should never be the case.

1 CORINTHIANS 14: 22

*Therefore, tongues are for sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers...*

- Paul knows that tongues are mainly an outreach tool. During his days, one would speak to foreigners during a mission trip and the Holy Spirit would interpret. This is why Paul, the greatest evangelist who ever lived, outside of Christ, spoke in tongues more than anyone else of his day: because of the many nationalities and cultures he met on his missionary journeys. Let's confirm this observation. See 1 Corinthians 14: 18 and 19 –  
*I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet in the church I would rather speak five words with understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.*

- Imagine how it must have felt to hear a Jew speak fluently in one of the African languages without being taught and without an interpreter? To the people who were reached in this manner, the gift of tongues was a supernatural sign that the evangelist was sent by God.

1 CORINTHIANS 14: 23, 27, 28 AND 33

*Therefore, if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church and let him speak to himself*

*and to God. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.*

- Speaking in tongues is not meant for all the believers. The Bible says, "No".
- A language foreign to others should be interpreted or it should not be used in church at all. Ideally, an arrangement should be sought for all believers to worship in a language they can understand.
- Individuals who want to enjoy worshipping God in their mother language, but are not willing to provide interpretation for others, should do so in their personal or private time and not at church.
- The order of worship at church should thrive on effective communication that benefits all worshippers.
- There are questions that remain a mystery: does God really need to speak through foreign tongues to a congregation that is monolingual? Suppose we are all Zulus. Do we really need a Zulu-fluent preacher to preach to us in French if there is no one to interpret? And why would anyone think that God should reach us through the language of angels when we are human? Would that not be illogical? What would He be trying to achieve through the language of angels? Is it not possible that what some people call tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 is totally different from the biblical understanding of tongues?
- Paul does not support any communication that makes no sense to anyone including oneself.

## Hope and Healing Moment

1 CORINTHIANS 12: 26 AND 27

*And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

- The reason God gave us different kinds of spiritual gifts is not for us to compete but to complement each other's strengths and cover our weaknesses as a group.
- We should operate as a team. We win together or lose together. No one should receive any blame alone or receive any honour alone. What happens to one, affects us all.
- The church that is united becomes a family of hope and a community healing.

## What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

➤ \_\_\_\_\_  
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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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- **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I need the Holy Spirit to equip me so that I may be of useful service to God and others.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
- I need aided personal Bible studies.
- Help me with any resources that explain the discussed subject matter in detail.
- I need a personal visit for emotional and spiritual support.

### My contacts

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile/WhatsApp \_\_\_\_\_

Face Book \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Here Is What The Bible Says About Responsible Stewardship

### Special Nugget

1 CORINTHIANS 4: 2

Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

### What is stewardship?

MATTHEW 25: 14-29

For the kingdom of heaven is like a man travelling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five. And likewise, he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, "Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them." His Lord said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord." He also who had received two talents came and said, "Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them." His lord said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord." Then he who had received one talent came and said, "Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours." But his lord answered and said to him, "You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore, take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

- From this story, we may freely say that:

- Stewardship is the trust and honour given us to take care of someone's property.
- Stewardship is a life of faithfulness. We should make every effort not to lose or misuse things that are entrusted to us.
- Stewardship is not just about being faithful over someone's else things. It is also about making productive use of those things so that they either increase or get better than they were when we first received them.
- Stewardship is an issue of accountability. Owners of property normally hold us accountable for the manner in which we treat their things. Where there is no accountability, chances of responsible stewardship are very rare.
- In a biblical sense, stewardship is also a relationship that exists between the Master and His servants. Christ is our Lord and we are His servants. All we have is His and all we are, are His. We have nothing of our own. We wholly depend on Him for everything.

### What are some of the things that the Creator entrusted to our care?

GENESIS 1: 26

Then God said, "Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

- The management of this planet, including everything on it, is under our care.

PSALM 127: 1

Unless God builds a house, they labour in vain who built it.

- Marriage and family belong to God. They are not ours. No wonder He expects us to manage them well.
- Please see: Malachi 2: 13 – 16; Matthew 19: 4 – 9; Ephesians 5: 21 – 6: 9 and etc.

EXODUS 31: 1 – 6

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "See, I have called by name Bezalel... And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works... And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab... and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you.

- Our professional or career skills are given to us by God. They are not ours.

HAGGAI 2: 8

*"The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine," says the Lord of hosts.*

ECCLESIASTES 5: 19

*As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labour – this is the gift of God.*

DEUTERONOMY 8: 18

*And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth.*

- Wealth is a gift from God.
- The power and wisdom we use to generate income and wealth are His.
- The blessings we derive from wealth is also a gift from God.

EXODUS 20: 8 AND 9

*Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work...*

ECCLESIASTES 3: 1 AND 11A

*To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven. He has made everything beautiful in its time...*

- Nobody owns time except the Creator. He is the one who created time.
- He expects us to work and to rest in respect to time.

1 CORINTHIANS 6: 19

*Or 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 10: 31

*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

- Our bodies and minds belong to God. He does not allow us to disuse or misuse them to the detriment of health and wellness.

- There are many other things in our possession that belong to God.

### How can Christians show that they are responsible stewards?

- We should manage the environmental well.
- We should care for animals and birds well.
- We should manage relationships well.
- We should use professional or career skills to serve both God and fellow human beings.

- We should continue to develop our skills and our usefulness.
- We should create and manage wealth well.
- We should manage time productively, including getting enough time to rest.
- We should manage our health intentionally and well.
- We should acknowledge that wealth is a gift from God and not necessarily from our own efforts and wisdom.

### What are some of the principles that remind us that God owns us and everything we have?

LEVITICUS 27: 30

*And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord.*

- The Bible teaches that a tenth part of our increase should be set apart for use by God. That portion is holy unto Him.
- The tithing system goes as far back as Abraham's time, before the Jewish nation had even come into existence. (Please see Hebrews 7: 1 and 2.)

MALACHI 3: 10

*"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me on this," says the Lord of Hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."*

- Tithing is God's financial plan to meet the needs of the gospel, including the welfare of church workers.
- But its primary purpose is to train us to acknowledge the lordship of Christ over all we have. Each time we return tithe, we are making a statement: that God is the Creator, the Lord, the Owner and the Provider of all we have.
- It is a system that tests our loyalty to God, but it also carries a promise with it. Faithfulness in tithing blesses us in many ways apart from just the financial needs. God has many different types of blessings than we can count.

EXODUS 20: 8 AND 9

*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work... For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

- The Sabbath says that the Creator owns the whole universe, including us. We are His created works.
- He is the One who brought time into existence. It is His.
- So, by keeping the Sabbath, we recognize that there is a Creator who owns all matter including time.
- God also expects us to work and He has inscribed this principle in the Fourth Commandment. So working is not only a right, but it is an obligation built into the Sabbath commandment. Unfortunately, many of us think of Sabbath just relates to rest. It also demands that we work. Working is an antidote to poverty and poor health.
- It is also wrong to work ourselves to death in order to survive or accumulate wealth. Therefore, rest is a life principle that we should observe.

### What role do offerings play in God's financial plan?

MALACHI 3: 8

*Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! Yet you say, "In what way have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings."*

- God's financial plan is two-prong: tithes and offerings.
- Returning tithes alone is not enough and giving offerings alone is not enough. We need to do both. That is the biblical way.

#### • What is an offering?

➤ JOHN 3: 16

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

- ❖ Offerings show our love to God and to our fellow humans.
- ❖ They are sacrificial in nature.
- ❖ Unlike our tithe, where we return a fixed percentage of what belongs to God, in offerings we give what belongs to us. We actually should give ourselves to God, including our possessions beyond measure, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself unto death.
- ❖ So the amount a person gives as an offering is determined by how much we love God, are willing to sacrifice, and how happy and thankful we are to God. Nobody should set the limit for us.

➤ 2 CORINTHIANS 9: 7

*So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

- ❖ An offering is based on free will.
- ❖ It ceases to be an offering once it is given grudgingly or by force.
- ❖ Giving should be a pleasure, in spite of the sacrifice that it sometimes demands.

#### • How should offerings be used by the church?

- Offerings complement tithes.
- Offerings support the ministries and programs of the church.
- Offerings support mission projects of the church within and beyond country borders.
- Offerings support the infrastructural development and maintenance of the church.
- Offerings support the church's social responsibility. By this we mean that the church has an obligation to improve the quality of life in society. The church is not only organized for heaven, but also for community development. Some of the ways in which churches may give back to society are by:
  - ❖ Establishing educational institutions.
  - ❖ Establishing health and wellness facilities.
  - ❖ Facilitating income-generating projects for communities.
  - ❖ Facilitating welfare programs (like feeding and care of destitute people).
  - ❖ Etc.

#### • Apart from our love for God and our fellow people, what should also guide how much offerings to give at a personal level?

➤ LUKE 14: 28

*For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it – lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him. All the needs and mission initiatives of the church need to be costed before the beginning of each financial year and be presented as a budget.*

- ❖ The church needs to vote the budget.
- ❖ Part of the budgetary process is for us, as church members, to commit ourselves to supporting the budget through our free-will offerings.
- ❖ But the best financial plan is when we as members determine how each one of us is going to contribute towards the budget so that we may spread our offerings systematically throughout the year. Systematic giving or planned giving is the spirit of Luke 14: 28. We need to know the overall budget and how we intend raising the required money; hence planned giving.

## Can the tithing and offering system be abused and how can we tell it is being?

1 TIMOTHY 6: 5 NIV

*And constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. The church has been infiltrated by some cunning, corrupt evangelists, pastors, so called apostles and bishops, who come as angels of light and yet they are entrepreneurs who use the church as fertile ground for making money.*

2 CORINTHIANS 11: 13

*For such are false prophets, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.*

- Here are tips that should help us raise suspicions of financial abuse by any religious system:
  - ❖ The organization is registered as a business and not as a church.
  - ❖ The finances are owned by an individual(s) and not by the church.
  - ❖ The finances of the church are not audited.
  - ❖ The finances of the church are largely spent on helping the founding member (owner) amass wealth for himself.
  - ❖ The church system has no social responsibility initiatives.
  - ❖ People are made to pay for the miracles they intend to or actually receive through some subtle appeals.
  - ❖ Etc.

## What do you think about this study?

### • Evaluation of the lesson

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

### • Knowledge appreciation

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

- \_\_\_\_\_  
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### • Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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**My contacts**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile/WhatsApp \_\_\_\_\_

Face Book \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Here Is What The Bible Says About Our Eternal Restoration**

**Special Nugget**

REVELATION 22: 1 – 5

*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*

**How was life like before humanity fell into sin.**

GENESIS 1: 31

*Then God saw everything He had made, and indeed it was very good...*

- Everything God made before sin happened on earth was absolutely beautiful and perfect.

GENESIS 2: 8, 9, 15, 16 AND 17

*The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God had made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then the Lord took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*

- The garden of Eden was the most gorgeous, homely environment on earth then. God gave Adam and Eve the best of the best for a home.
- The tree of life was a promise for eternal life.
- The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a call to a life of purity in character.
- Adam and Eve enjoyed direct, face to face, communication with God.

## What does eternal restoration mean?

REVELATION 22: 1 – 5

*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*

- Eternal restoration means to return to the state humanity was before Adam fell into sin.
- And here are some of the things that we are going to regain after God has destroyed Satan and sin forever:
  - ❖ We will spend eternity in a perfect environment that provides life, health and goodness.
  - ❖ We will have access to the tree of life – there will be no more death.
  - ❖ God's character will also be our character forever and ever. There will be no more sin.
  - ❖ We will share eternity with the Creator and we shall see Him as He is.

## What are some of the major milestones that lead us to eternal restoration?

JOHN 19: 30

*So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5: 19A

*That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself...*

- Our restoration was purchased at the Cross.
- When Jesus said, "It is finished," He meant sin has been conquered and that the salvation of humanity is now a reality.
- The Cross is the key that unlocked the door through which we are welcomed back into the family of God.

JOHN 3: 16

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

- Apart from the death of Christ on the cross, our response to God's love is the next most important step towards our eternal restoration.
- We have to accept Christ as our personal Saviour if we are to be reconciled with God.
- The Holy Spirit is ever available to help us take a step of reconciliation with God (John 3: 3-6).

MATTHEW 28: 18-20

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

- We are not to sit back, do nothing, as we wait for our eternal restoration.
- Jesus has given us some work to do:
  - ❖ To obey Him as our Lord.
  - ❖ To share the gospel around the world and to make disciples – people who are born again, who grow in grace, including making a difference in communities as we, ourselves, should do. Until then, we will not be ready to spend eternity with God.

REVELATION 14: 6 AND 7

*Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people – saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."*

- The Bible reveals that before Christ comes to end the world, God is involved in what we may call pre-advent judgment (judgment that takes place before the second coming of Christ).
- The pre-advent judgment message is part of the eternal gospel. It is not intended to be a threat, but is instead God's invitation of love to a deep relationship with us.
- The invitation is to worship no gods other than the Creator in truth and in spirit (sincerity of heart) – John 4: 23.

JAMES 2: 10-12

*For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, is guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder". Now, if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.*

See also Ecclesiastes 12: 13 and 14.

- Judgment is based on all the ten commandments.
- The ten are one whole. So breaking one of them results in breaking the whole moral code.

N. B: Judgment is not a search for human perfection against the law. Rather, it is a search for how much we depend on Christ for victory over sin including our confession of known sins. For Christ is our righteousness and our forgiveness (Galatians 2: 20 and 1 John 1: 8 and 9; 2: 1). So, those who are in Christ need not fear judgment (Romans: 8: 1).

REVELATION 22: 11

*He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is unholy, let him be unholy still.*

- The judgment that decides the eternal destiny for everyone takes place before Jesus comes to take us to heaven. The two camps (the redeemed and the lost) will have been decided already and nothing will change after that judgment is closed.
- Now is the opportunity to leave our sinful lives and accept Christ as our personal Saviour. One day it will be too late to make that decision.

### What event follows the pre-advent judgment?

MATTHEW 24: 30 AND 31

*Then the sign of the Son of Man (Christ – inserted) will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven (angels – inserted) with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

REVELATION 1: 7

*Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.*

- The coming of Christ is going to be a reality one day.
- He will be accompanied by millions and millions of angels, such that they will fill the sky as if they were clouds.
- His coming will be a noisy, public event which cannot be missed by anyone.
- The redeemed will rejoice while the lost will mourn over their eternal loss.
- So there is no one going to heaven by themselves now after death. Christ is coming to take us there in the most celebrated occasion of all time (John 14: 1-3).

### How many resurrections are there?

1 THESSALONIANS 4: 16 AND 17

*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

- The first resurrection is for all those who accepted Christ during their life time.

Revelation 20: 5 and 6

But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.

This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

- Those who take part in the first resurrection will have a honeymoon with Christ in heaven in the presence of God and His angels for a thousand years, while the lost remain dead on earth.
- We will spend part of the one thousand years understanding why the devil, demons and the lost humans will receive eternal punishment. Hence the idea of us being priests and reigning with Christ for that specified period.

1 CORINTHIANS 6: 3

*Do you not know that we shall judge angels?*

REVELATION 20: 7 AND 13

*Now, when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth... The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.*

- The second resurrection takes place after a thousand years of the first resurrection.
- They are resurrected to face their eternal punishment.
- So there is no hell fire currently.

### Who and what will meet eternal destruction?

REVELATION 20: 10, 14 AND 15

*The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

- The devil and his demons (Matthew 25: 41)
- The Antichrist
- The false prophets (religious leaders) who misled people
- Those whose names are not in the Book of Life
- Death itself (1 Corinthians 15: 26)
- Sin

MALACHI 4: 3

*You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this.*

- The lost will not burn forever.
- The effect of their destruction is what is eternal. Hence the second death (Revelation 20: 6 and 14). It does not make sense to speak of the second death if the lost were to continue to burn forever and ever without dying.

### What eternal reward awaits those who believe in Christ?

REVELATION 20: 1 – 5

*Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*

- Our planet will be recreated after it will have been destroyed by fire.
- We will dwell in the new earth forever and ever with God.
- Life challenges will be a thing of the past.
- We will be free at last and forevermore.

### Hope and Healing Moment

1 JOHN 3: 1 – 3

*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for*

*we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

- The salvation narrative (story) is about God's love towards us.
- He is not ashamed to be called our Father.
- He wants to dwell with us on a face-to-face basis.
- The hope of sharing eternity with Him compels us to live a righteous life in Christ Jesus (Galatians 2: 20).
- We cannot help but celebrate the idea of a great and wonderful future ahead us. It is the blessed hope (Titus 2: 13.).
- Hope gives us resilience and peace in spite of the many challenges we face today (2 Corinthians 4: 16-18). A better day is coming.

## What do you think about this study?

- **Evaluation of the lesson**

The presenter's interpretation is in line with what the Bible says on the subject matter:

- Yes
- No
- Not so sure

- **Knowledge appreciation**

List any three very important things that you have learnt in this study.

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- **Write down any question that you seriously need answers to.**

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- **Any special needs – Please tick all applicable:**

- I want to spend eternity with God.
- I need prayers for things that I cannot disclose here.
- I don't mind developing friendships with Adventists.
- I need aided personal Bible studies.
- Help me with any resources that explain the discussed subject matter in detail.
- I need a personal visit for emotional and spiritual support.

### My contacts

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile/WhatsApp \_\_\_\_\_

Face Book \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

